

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

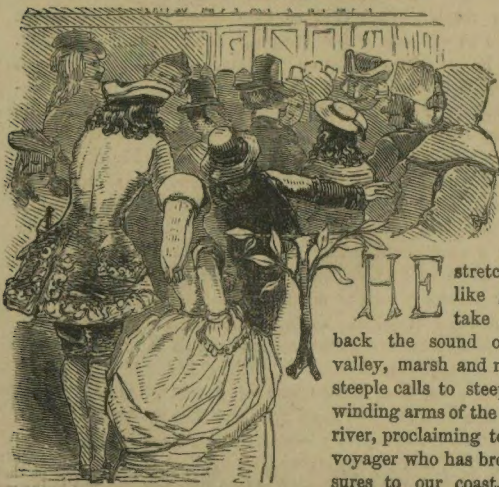
No. 405.—VOL. XV]

CHRISTMAS, 1849.

[NUMBER AND SUPPLEMENT, 1s.]

CHRISTMAS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

BY THOMAS MILLER.



HUNDREDS of silver toned bells of London ring loud, deep, and clear, from tower and spire to welcome in Christmas. The far-stretching suburbs, like glad children, take up and fling back the sound over hill and valley, marsh and meadow, while steeple calls to steeple across the winding arms of the mast-crowded river, proclaiming to the heathen voyager who has brought his treasures to our coast, and who is

ignorant of our religion, the approach of some great Christian festival. Through the long night of departed centuries has that old Saxon sound pealed over our ancient City—from soon after the period when Augustin and his brother monks landed in England, with the banner borne before them, on which was emblazoned the figure of the dying Redeemer, while they moved gravely along, chanting the Holy Litany. We have often paused, with closed eyes, in some star-lighted lane in the suburbs, and listened to the sound of those sweet Christmas-bells, until the imagination was borne far away to the fields of Bethlehem (flooded with heavenly light), and we fancied we again heard those angel-voices which startled the shepherds as they watched their flocks by night, while proclaiming high overhead, "Peace on earth, and goodwill towards men." We seemed again to catch glimpses of

The star-led wizards hastening with odours sweet, as Milton beheld them with the far-seeing eye of poetry, coming

From far upon the Eastern road, until they reached the lowly roof which sheltered the God-born child and his meek mother, when they offered up "gold, frankincense, and myrrh." Such images floated before our mental vision, as the great Rubens seized upon and transferred to his glowing canvas, and such as we have pictured in our present pages from the work of the immortal artist, with all its rich masses of flooding light and deepening shade:

and wanting only the matchless colouring to bring the original before the eyes of our readers. Such a splendid illustration as we have here given needs neither the garniture of holly, ivy, nor mistletoe to render it a fitting present for the old festival of Christmas: the beauty of the Virgin Mother, the simple majesty of the Holy Child, and the pious adoration of the kneeling sage, bear the stamp of the hand of the mighty master who was alone competent to grapple with so great a subject.

MISTLETOE.

Glancing for a moment at the evergreens which are used in our Christmas decorations, we see no cause for searching in the ancient heathen rites of other countries for their origin. That the Mistletoe was held sacred by the ancient Druids, we have the authority of the classic Roman historian to prove, and which no one has ever doubted. The altars of Thor and Woden were not overthrown in a day: those who worshipped the true God were at first compelled to kneel before these heathen shrines. Redwald, the King of East Anglia, had two altars in his temple, one to Woden and the other to the Almighty; for, although his heart yearned towards the true God, he was afraid of the vengeance of the imaginary idol he had so long bowed before. Amid pagan altars and hideous images, the early Christians knelt: and the beautiful Bertha (through whose meek persuasion Ethelbert was converted to the true faith) first worshipped beneath the roof of one of these old heathen temples in which the mistletoe was hung; and where



THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.—DRAWN BY KENNY MEADOWS.—(SEE PAGE 419.)

the grim images of Thor and Woden frowned from the walls, there did she kneel and offer up her prayers to heaven. The far-seeing Pope Gregory attempted not to abolish these heathen rites altogether, but rightly argued that if their pagan temples were held sacred while set apart for the worship of rude shapeless images, how much more would such spots be revered when the light of the true Gospel broke through the heathen darkness. By many of the early Christians would the mistletoe be held in reverence; for, although it had hung above the heads of their idols, it was not the work of the image-maker, but a production of nature, and a native of their own wild forests; it twined around the grey oaks under which the Roman legions had marched, and was, perhaps, the only remnant they at last retained of their old idolatry—the only link that remained between Christianity and Heathenism.

HOLLY.

The very beauty of the green-leaved and red-berried Holly would recommend it as a fitting ornament for the great Christmas Festival. What the oak is to the summer wood, the pride and ornament of the grove, such is the holly in the land of trees, amid the nakedness of winter. When the mountain ash has shed its rich garniture of green and crimson on the funeral pyre of autumn (that pile kindled with all the gaudy hues of the decaying flowers and bowers of summer), the holly stands unchanged amid the death and desolation of the landscape, and seems sole King of the outstretched forest. While far and wide the woods are covered with snow, looking as if Winter lay asleep beneath the leafless trees, in such a spot we have seen the holly crowning some eminence (the pillow or head of the sleeper), as if wreathing his grey old locks with a garland of evergreen and flaming rubies.

IVY.

The ancient emblem of friendship, seems sacred to time and old ruins. It grows about our churches, and droops above the weather-stained windows, where it hangs waving between us and the outer light, as if to force itself upon our notice. It climbs around our country-houses, and grows above the churchyard graves, as if it claimed kindred with the living and the dead. Whether it winds its way to the top-most boughs of a tree, the battlemented tower of some sacred edifice, or around the twisted chimneys of the manor-house, it tells a tale of bygone years, and of the many old Christmases which have passed away since it first shot up its wiry stem, and threw out its few green leaves below, unnoticed by human eye. We cannot gaze on it without thinking of the many Christmas feasts it has decorated; how year after year eager hands gathered its dark-waving trails; how eyes once bright looked upon it, and fond hearts heaved and fluttered as they bore home the winter garland—eyes now dark, and hearts for ever cold, which once beamed and beat in the midst of old festivities, but will never more brighten nor bound to the merry ringing of the Christmas bells. These reflections make Christmas a solemn time; and when we think of the awful year now fast fading away, a deep shadow throws itself over our pages—the Shadow of the Valley of Death.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

To brighter scenes will we now turn—to the life and happiness which Merry Old Christmas brings to millions of human hearts, while he throws a sunshine, brighter than that of summer, over thousands of English hearths. Pleasant memories are brought to the mind by the interchange of presents at this hospitable season. London pours into the country its treasures of wines, spirits, foreign fruit, and fish; while from many an ancient hamlet and old thatched grange are sent back the produce of field and farm. Fowls from the inland meres and rushy pools; game from many a secluded woodland, dell, and wild moor, are offered up on the great altar of Christmas, until the sacrifice of Friendship throws its delightful odour throughout the whole length and breadth of the land. The swift-winged railway-carriages groan beneath the heavy loads of good things which they are doomed to drag to and fro; while the streets of busy London are filled with carriers' carts; and Parcel-Delivery-men flit hither and thither, the attendants of Plenty, clothed in decent livery, and occupying the place of those nude nymphs whom ancient fables portrayed as attendants upon the ever-bountiful goddess.

OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOMS.

Although the Great Fire of London destroyed thousands of houses whose roofs were blackened by the smoke of many a huge yule-clog, a few of the old edifices still remain which have looked down on the merry Christmases of other days, when

Pomp and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry,

broke the silence which now reigns around their ancient walls. Nor is the yule-clog yet extinct; for there are still many old-fashioned families in England, who would never fancy that it was Christmas, unless the huge tree-root blazed on the hearth, and shot its tongue of flame high

Up the huge chimney gaping wide.

In the country, long before it is light, you hear the voices of children going from house to house on Christmas-Day morning, and repeating the simple old couplet—

I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy new year;
A pocket full of money,
And a cellar full of beer!

when, perhaps, instead of receiving the Christmas-box, for which they thus earnestly plead, a voice is heard from within the house (by the door of which they stand) exclaiming "The same to you, my lad!"—a poor recompense for rising so early, and braving the wintry cold before day-dawn. In town and country we have still the Waits playing in the streets, and breaking the deep midnight silence with much sweeter music than that of the rude pipe and tabor which disturbed the sound slumber of our simple forefathers. Though the boar's head and the huge wassail-bowl have vanished from our feasts, and there are fewer ceremonies and outward shows to usher in Merry Old Christmas than formerly, there is nothing to regret in the decay of many of those barbaric customs which gave pleasure to our laughter-loving ancestors. Such masques and mummings as were the delight of an old English Baron's retainers, and were well adapted for the rude revelry of the huge baronial hall, are no more suited to our modern tastes, than the rush-strown floors and chimneyless apartments would be to the wants of an English lady in the present day.

There is no more to deplore in the absence of *Friar Tuck*, *Maid Marian*, *Robin Hood*, with all his merry men, the huge dragon, and the hobby-horses, than there is in the extinction of the old moralities, whose places are now supplied by the dramas of Shakspeare, and others which have appeared since he first wrote. Christmas has outlived all antique mummery, and is all the better for having shaken off his ancient and faded trappings. His great spirit still survives, unchanged by time; and, with few exceptions, he is received with the same hospitality as he was of old. His mighty soul still lives, and for one day in the year he throws the light of his bluff, hearty-old English countenance over the meagre board of the hungry workhouse, and the gloomy walls of the

debtor's prison. True, there are no longer the gates of the monastery, abbey, or castle thrown open, as of old, for the relief of "loop'd and window'd raggedness" on Christmas-Day, when none were permitted, at that holy time, to go away hungry, thirsty, nor empty-handed. Alas! the houseless beggar is too often left to stand shivering in the all but empty streets—

Homeless, beside a thousand hearths.

CHRISTMAS CHARITIES.

But open-handed Charity, thank God! still walks abroad at this inclement season of the year; and in no country in the world does she scatter her gifts more profusely than in England—for, surrounded as we are by poverty and misery, millions are paid and given away annually to the poor. The picture has its bright and dark sides; and to-day we will turn the gloomy part to the wall, with a sigh. Charity has, for one day in the year, caused the poor pauper to forget his poverty, and he again smiles as he sits before the board which she has so bountifully spread. His thoughts wander back to the happy Christmas dinners over which he once presided, when he had a home which he proudly called his own. Memory pictures the past—his wife, his children; some now dead—others scattered over the world, he knows not whither. He sees old faces glittering in the bright holly berries—he hears old voices in the cheerful crackling of the fire, and smiles faintly while his thoughts wander to the days of other years; and he talks over these old times to his companion in adversity—to one who, perchance, like himself, has seen happier and better days. Wealth has ever at its command the power of dispensing such pleasures as these over the land; nor would any feeling man who pays a poor-rate begrudge an extra shilling or two to make the inmates of the workhouse happy on such an occasion as this—even though he himself is poor. With what a zest a man sits down to his Christmas dinner, when he knows that he has made some poor family happy by having provided for them on this day—whether it be to subscribe to some coal charity, such as our Engraving represents; or only to throw in his mite towards purchasing blankets for the poor, or supplying them once a day with soup. And oh! how little is required to throw the sunshine of happiness around some miserable abode—to scatter smiles where tears and sighs are too often found; and to know that, instead of a sorrowful group, huddling around the all but fireless grate, the little pudding is boiling in the pot, and the small joint turning on its worsted jack, from the fork stuck into the mantelpiece above the fire—that there is a happy light dancing in the children's eyes—a clapping of little hands every time the saucepan lid is uplifted—and that five paltry shillings purchased all this happiness. Trifles such as these make both the giver and the receiver happy; and though, without, "all along the wind doth blow," there is within the breast "a peace that surpasseth all riches." If we sigh for the Christmases of the olden time, it is because Charity then overflowed the land. From the Court, the glad stream ran through abbey and baronial hall, into the lowliest cottage and the humblest shed: even the serf, who was sold like a slave with the soil, shared the feast amid the general rejoicing, though he sat far below the salt, and, through the reeking and savoury odours, obtained but a dim glimpse of the lordly dais, overhung by armour and sylvan trophies. Honest old Thomas Tusser, in his "Hundredth Good Poyntes of Husbandrie," first printed in 1557, says—

At Christmas be merry, and thank God for all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great with the small.

And the author of the "Sketch-Book," in a few brief, happy sentences, says those were good times "when the old halls of castles and manor-houses were thrown open at daylight; when the tables were covered with brawn and beef, and humming ale; when the harp and the carol resounded all day long, and when rich and poor were alike welcome to enter and make merry; when the Old English Gentleman, on Christmas-Day in the morning, had all his tenants and neighbours at his hall by daybreak; when the strong beer was broached, and the black-jacks went plentifully about with toast, sugar, and nutmeg, and good Cheshire cheese; when the great sausage was boiled by daybreak, or else two young men took the cook by the arms and ran her round the village-green until she was ashamed of her laziness." The Picture shows one of the many "Distributions" that are made in the metropolis at this festive season.—(See page 424.)

CHRISTMAS-EVE IN YORKSHIRE.—(See page 420.)

This Sketch, drawn on the spot by Dodgson, is a representation of a Merry-Making on Christmas-Eve in one of our northern counties. The scene is one of those large kitchens which are only to be found in some old English manor-house. Supper is over, and all cleared away for the dance; drinking will go on until the Waits come, which will be long after midnight, when the large table will once more be spread with refreshments, and the cup will continue to circulate until morning. Elder wine, spiced ale, and "egg-hot" are the principal beverages drunk in the north of England on Christmas-Eve. The fiddler is generally some old man who attends all the wakes, feasts, statutes, harvest-homes, and sheep-shearing feasts for miles around. He plays only old English tunes: were you to ask him to play some polka, ten to one he would open his eyes in astonishment, and say, "Is it owt good to yeat?" He hates all sorts of "new-fangled tunes" as he calls them, and would not give a straw to play to dancers who do not shake the house, and all but drive the floor in through stamping on it. He sighs for the good old times when gentlemen danced in top-boots, and wore spurs, and says, "Loaks! there woresumfun then." Nor does there appear to be any want of it in the Sketch which our Artist has here placed before us. There is sure to be a smash amongst the crockery before the laughing girl on the dresser is caught, or the kiss is obtained, which they have overturned the chair in struggling for. The old woman seated in the arm-chair by the fire looks on the scene with delight, and perhaps recalls the time when she was as merry a romp as any in the group before her. She who is drawn under the mistletoe-bough half averts her head, and seemingly grants with reluctance the kiss which her heart flutters to receive. Even the boy, who has helped to capture the fair prisoner, appears to chuckle again, as he beholds the pleasant penance she is undergoing. The "toddling child" is also "timing its footsteps" to the dance at the very moment the words "Hands across" have been uttered by the old fiddler, who acts the part of musician and master of the ceremonies, and "rates" the rustic dancers in no very measured terms when they miss what he calls "the figure."

THE GAME OF FORFEITS.—(See page 428.)

We have here a Sketch by the far-famed Kenny Meadows, who stands second to none in his delineations of character; other proofs of which we also present in his "Game of Blind-Man's Buff," and his imitable "Christmas Pudding"—two subjects belonging to another portion of our description of Christmas. The Game of Forfeits is now, we believe, very rare in London; it is too romping and noisy an amusement for the chilling atmosphere and somewhat too stately decorum of our modern drawingrooms; so we must confine our description to what we have seen in the free-and-easy country. While gazing on this picture, the curtain seems once more uplifted which had closed over and

shrouded the merry Christmas revels we joined in twenty years ago: faces and forms well-remembered are again thrown upon the mirror of Memory; and instead of the happy group here presented, we are once more under the roof of the old thatched grange, among

Honest lads and bonnie lassies.

The Game of Forfeits commenced by spinning a wooden trencher or dish, and was called "Turn-Trencher." We took our seats round the room, when one of the party stepped forward and spun the trencher on the floor. No one could tell who would be called upon to catch it while spinning, until the name was proclaimed by the spinner, which was seldom done until the trencher appeared ready to fall. If not caught before it fell, we had to pay a forfeit. The girls gave up their purses, necklaces, gloves; the young men their watches, pencil-cases, nay, even coats and hats, if nothing better could be obtained; for not one in five caught the trencher while spinning, though we were all eye, all ear, and up in a moment. When "turn-trencher" ended, the real fun commenced by redeeming the forfeits, which stood piled high on the table. We well knew that some kind of freemasonry existed between the bonny girl who held up the forfeit and the sly gipsy that knelt down, as if pretending not to know to whom the pledge belonged, while she passed sentence with her face buried in the lap of her laughing companion. There was something only known to themselves in the way of introducing "the pretty thing, or the very pretty thing," by which the kneeling sybil was as well able to identify the party to whom the pledge belonged as if she looked him fully in the face; and what hearty roars of laughter pealed through the room when the modest Mr. Simpkins was sentenced to kiss some blushing damsel through the tongs before he could redeem the article he had forfeited; then his endeavouring to look sentimental all the while he stood looking through the tongs, as if screwed in an iron pillory; and the "Oh, dear! it was so ridiculous, she could not think or such a thing;" so, after much intercession, poor Simpkins was let off, after having kissed the knob of the poker three times. Then the tall, starched Mr. Prim, who would have fainted had there been a crease in his neckcloth or a wrinkle in his tightly-strapped trousers, what must he do to redeem the gold watch which everybody knew he forfeited only to let it be known that he had one? The pretty gipsy on her bended knees titters: there is mischief brewing; he must touch the hearth three times with his nose. They say he wears stays. You would as soon think of the Monument bowing to you as of Mr. Prim stooping so low as the hearth. Mercy on us! he smirks and kneels; and bang goes one strap—his knee has also gone through, and he is off like a shot. Pride has indeed had a fall. Or picture yourself having to whistle some tune through the key-hole without once laughing—you, whose roar is ever ready if you only see some grotesque head on the knocker of a door; or to look fixedly at the candle five minutes without once smiling, and that too when one of your companions, renowned for his long face, is puckering up his mouth like a pair of old-fashioned nut-crackers; or perchance you are sentenced to kiss some crusty old aunt through the chair-back, it being well known that you have not been on speaking terms with her for nearly twelve months. Then there is such a good-natured smile in the dear old lady's face, as she kneels behind the chair-back, that you see at the first glance all is forgotten and forgiven, and you date the commencement of a life-lasting friendship from that merry Christmas-Eve, and noisy Game of Forfeits. Dear Harriet, Rose, Julia, Sarah with the mild hazel eyes, and thou, sweet May, whose very name was "lover's own poetry"—oh! whither have ye fled? Alas! hushed are many of the "daughters of music," whose blythe carols made glad the merry Christmases of other days—voices which we hope are now heard among the angel-ranks of heaven, far away beyond that wing-swept pathway above the silvery shivering of the stars. May, with her golden hair veiling her face, and kneeling with folded wings beside the Stream of Life, and looking at her own shadow like another Eve in the "glassy, cool, pellucid wave." Grim old Scythe-Bearer, thou hast cut down a flower here and there, and left the garden in which we once delighted naked and desolate, and us to sigh alone amid the desert waste. Instead of the fresh dews of morning, thy grey wings are wet with bitter tears; thou art indeed the "Mower whose name is Death!" But the course of time is marked by changes; the ups and downs of life are the mile-posts that dot the road over which we travel, each telling us that we are drawing nearer to our journey's end.

BLINDMAN'S-BUFF.—(See page 428.)

Clear the decks! and leave us ample space enough for this thorough old English game. Turn up the largest table, with the leaf towards the fire, and remember that it is not fair to hide behind it: let us be wise in the midst of our harmless folly, and avoid danger. But what has Meadows introduced here?—the old grandfathers and grandmothers amongst the children! "The child is father of the man," says Wordsworth; and there can be no harm in the bald-headed old sire stepping back again into the spirit of childhood. What a touch of nature is that, where the dear old lady, having all but lost her cap, is trying to save her peruke or false front! Not for worlds would she be seen with her top—

Bare through hoar antiquity.

Rely upon it, her bald-pate is a secret to all, saving the hearty old fellow (no doubt, her husband) who enters into the joke, and seems to exclaim, "Pull away, and then you will see the nakedness of the land;" for Time has left him a few "sad grey hairs" behind, and he wears them with pride and honour. What a merry, mischievous leer there is in his dim old eye; and what sly jokes he will crack all the remainder of the year about the narrow escape she had at Christmas! And some of the hearty old blades will, perhaps, write to her, and beg a lock of her hair; and, though angry for the moment, she will at last join in the laugh against herself, and talk about her poor bald pate. Long may your graceful ringlets throw their shadows on your damask cheeks, my dear young ladies; and you live to laugh, as you do now, at the bewilderment of the dear old woman. How eagerly the sweet children enter into the sport, except the least of all, that lies squalling and neglected on the floor, and cannot make its tiny voice heard above the uproarious laughter. What an expression of delight there is on the boy's sweet countenance, who is looking up to the portly gentleman that is the cause of so much merriment. Sadly is he disfiguring the "thick rotundity" of the stout old lady with her back to us, to the great amusement of the old man who stands with one leg drawn up, and with whose countenance we seem to have been familiar from childhood. But oh! the shouts of delight when three or four children, who have huddled together in one corner, are caught by Blindman-Buff: their struggle to escape as they tumble head-over-heels, one over the other—this with a torn frock, that with a shoe off, the other with its little round fat arm clean out of its dress. That is sport indeed; and their dear, merry voices seem to ring like music through our hearts weeks and months after the festival of Christmas.

It seems but as yesterday when we assembled in the large old parlour to play at Blindman's-Buff: when the huge bunch of everlasting flowers was removed from its accustomed place on the ceiling to make room for the mistletoe bough, whose berries we should as soon think of

numbering as the kisses which were given and received beneath them. What sweet faces did the huge yule-clog flash upon on that merry night! what eyes, "which ever loved the ground," saving when glancing upon that mysterious bough, amid whose leaves and pale berries some spell seemed to be secreted! Often do they still rise before us in the still midnight—their shadows appearing to fall, as of old, upon the walls—long locks and swan-like necks ever shifting like pillars of light, as we sit and dream of the past. In the low tongues of flame that babble in the barred grate, they at times seem speaking to us of old festivals and merry days that can never more return—subdued kisses, smothered before they found utterance, and driven back upon the heart, like bees fluttering among flowers, from which they have not the power to escape. But we will no longer look upon those forms

Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns.

THE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.—(See page 417.)

We miss the father in this eager, hungry-looking picture; and if he has gone out to dine anywhere on such a day as this, he ought to be ashamed of himself. Perhaps Meadows intended conveying some such rebuke, for it seems difficult to keep the children in order, nor does the lady look at all pleased at having to serve so many. The little thing holding the plate beside the mother ought, in our opinion, to have been served first, as it is, to all appearance, the youngest. That beautiful girl seated at the end of the table will wait patiently until the last, and then her eye will often wander to her little sisters, to see that they are not eating too fast, or burning themselves. Master Freddy, in the plaid frock, should wait awhile, if we had him to deal with, for pushing himself and plate so forward. Master Jack has stuck a piece much too large for a single mouthful on his fork, and is also holding up his leg in a very unbecoming manner. As for Bill, he seems to be eating with two spoons at once: that boy will make himself ill, depend upon it, for, after having been served twice, he is sure to ask for more. Bill and Jack look like two mischievous young rascals, and we would wager a trifle that, if their pockets were searched, crackers would be found there; and that, if their mother's back were turned for a moment, they wouldn't at all mind throwing one into the fire, and making the little creatures who are eating their pudding beside the fender jump again. A pretty life do those young dogs lead that servant; and, unless their father is a little more at home, the neighbours say they do not know what will become of them. There is not a cat about the place but what they are after it; and they are constantly firing little cannons through keyholes, and frightening the people "out of their wits." It was only the other day that Master Jackey shoved a paper full of gunpowder under the pan in which an old woman roasted her chestnuts, at an apple-stall at the end of the street, and blew up her whole establishment. He would not have had any pudding at all if his father had been at home. Those boys, if left to themselves, would make a tremendous hole in the pudding before they left off, and, very probably, be under the doctor's hands on the following day.

But there is something delightful, after all, in seeing children enjoy themselves, in watching their little eyes sparkle, noticing them pause for a moment or two to recover breath, then try again: slower and at longer intervals are the pieces of pudding now taken up—the dear rosy lips have scarcely any motion, and at last the sweet rounded mouth is at rest, for, wrong as it is, they have eaten until they are surfeited. Pretty dears, if they are ill, Christmas only comes once a year; and although they will kick and scream dreadfully when compelled to swallow the physic, they have enjoyed themselves beforehand, and there is no real pleasure without a little pain. We know no readier way of turning little "babbies" into angels than allowing them to gorge themselves with Christmas pudding: all good mothers know that such heavy dainties ought to be dealt out with a sparing hand. We hope that many of the Master Jackies and Billies will read this portion of our article on Christmas, and bear in mind that even pudding carries its own punishment when swallowed to excess.

CHRISTMAS PRIZE CATTLE.

Although we are not amongst the admirers of unnatural fatness, we cannot refrain from visiting the Cattle Show, nor peeping into the butchers' shops at Christmas. We know no country that could pasture such bulk and bone as we there behold, except England, nor any stomachs that could digest such rich bilious food except those of Englishmen. We have seen some of our huge London draymen and sinewy coal-heavers pick out the fattest portions they could find, seeming to regret that there was a single stripe of lean in the whole joint. Fine Laplanders would those fellows make, and do ample justice to a banquet of whale's blubber. They would glory in a portion of a bullock that was fed only on chopped suet and oil-cake. What monstrous pigs do we also see at this season of the year! if they ever walked at all, they must, like Falstaff, have "larded the lean earth" over which they passed. As for the sheep, we can scarcely fancy that such huge legs of mutton ever moved, but by some secret process must have been dipped as they dip candles, layer upon layer, then left to cool before they were again immersed, until they finally attained their unnatural thickness and fatness. There we see calves that may have been suckled by elephants, and that seem to have shared in the bulky proportions of their gigantic foster-mothers. Alive, they look clean and beautiful; but when slaughtered and hung up, we should intercede for the levelling of a few of those useless mountains of fat before we were tempted to become purchasers. After all, a sirloin of Christmas beef is a noble adjunct to the table, and is generally valued all the more if it has been cut from a prize ox. The roast beef of Old England was the boast of our forefathers, and our national pride will never degenerate or permit any other nation to bear away this trophy.

GOOSE-CLUBS

are held at hundreds of the public-houses in London. The members pay a shilling a week for eight or ten weeks before Christmas, and, in addition to a goose, are generally entitled to a bottle of gin for their ten shillings. Those who pay but sixpence weekly have a piece of beef: tea and sugar for the women are also amongst these Christmas prizes. These clubs are got up "to benefit the house," as it is called; and there is but little doubt that, with the money spent over the meetings, every goose costs at least a pound in the end. Right proud is the landlord to show his prize geese to his customers; and great delight does he take in telling them about the number of miles he travelled by rail, of the bargain he made weeks before to be supplied with geese of the first quality at so much per head, and how, "not to be done," he examined them all; and that, when the time came for fetching them away, the goose-feeder said that he shouldn't mind "giving him a five-pun' note for his bargain." He tells you that they were stubble fed in autumn; that up to Christmas they had—he can hardly tell you what—but you almost believe, while you listen, that when roasted, they will, without any addition of any kind whatsoever, have the flavour of apple-sauce, sage and onions, and fine mealy potatoes. But he always advises those who carry off a fine goose to take with them a bottle of spirits, for "goose is rich," he says, "and spirits are always handy in a house, especially at Christmas time, for geese will sometimes disagree with the

"strongest of persons;" in a word, he is as kind as a father to his customers. A perfect babel of sounds is a public-house on Christmas-Eve when the prizes are drawn, and many a pint of gin is won and lost about the weight of the different geese before the members separate for the night.

MEETING OF FAMILIES AT CHRISTMAS.

One of the greatest pleasures Christmas brings is, the assembling of members of families—the bringing together once more all "the old familiar faces" around the household hearth. To see the venerable father and mother still occupying their old arm-chairs; to sit at the same place at the table which they formerly claimed as their own, beside the sister with whom they once kissed and quarrelled a dozen times a day, yet loved all the more after each childish squabble—these are the little home touches that send a silent thrill through the heart, and force tears into the eyes unawares: to see the old man still hale and hearty, though bearing the marks of the winter of age in his silver hairs—his eye scarcely dimmed, though he cannot see to read such small print as he formerly read; his whole countenance brightened up by that light from within, which proclaims a clear conscience and "a heart at peace with all mankind." To see the tears gathering in his eye, as with tremulous voice he uplifts his glass after the Christmas dinner is over and the dessert placed on the table, while in a few apt words he expresses his delight at seeing them all again, and ends by praying God to bless them all; words which unloosen the fountains of every heart, and fill each eye with tears of gentle joy, causing them to weep "at what they are glad of," as the great Shakespeare has expressed this silent language of the heart. And she who perchance at that moment sits beside him, her gentle eyes beaming with the light of love—who has shared his pilgrimage for fifty long years, slides her hand gently into his own, and by that silent pressure proclaims how much she feels; then glancing through her tears on all the beloved faces which surround her, breathes an inward prayer to be united to them for ever in heaven; for dearly does she love them all, and calmly awaits the hour when she must lead the way along that path which, sooner or later, they must all tread. Then there are the little grandchildren, all wearing something of the old family likeness, and the married sons and daughters see them seated on the grandfather's knee—on the knee where they once sat—playing with the large gold seal which they can just remember to have played with, or listening to the ticking of the great gold watch, which they, when children, believed to be alive. Then come the little histories of those who are absent, who have got on but indifferently in the world, who have made good or bad marriages; and there sometimes reigns a silence for several moments, as they recal the faces of those whom they have so often met around that hearth. The image of some pretty cousin rises up, who was the pride of their Christmas parties—the very life of their childish amusements; and tender is the appeal of some one present (one, perhaps, in whose heart she once fondly reigned), when he speaks of her unfortunate marriage, her poverty, and her sufferings—how she now dwells in an attic or a cellar in some distant town—and they are again made to feel how all loved her; a tear is shed over the recital of her misfortunes, and in a day or two after this meeting amongst those who can never wholly forget her, she receives some present which almost breaks her heart through very joy—that joy which is the grief of gladness.

PICTURESQUE SKETCHES OF LONDON, PAST AND PRESENT.

BY THOMAS MILLER.

CHAPTER XIX.

A LONDON FOG.—(See page 432.)

SUCH of our country readers as have never been in town about this season of the year, can scarcely imagine what it is to grope their way through a downright thorough London Fog. It is something like being imbedded in a dilution of yellow peas-pudding, just thick enough to get through it without being wholly choked or completely suffocated. You can just see through the yard of it which, at the next stride, you are doomed to swallow, and that is all. It is a kind of meat and drink, and very sorry sustenance for those who are asthmatical, as you may tell by hearing one old cough answering to another from opposite sides of the street, and which, although you cannot see the passengers, you can tell, from their grumbling, that they do not like the fare at all. You have the same soft-soapy atmosphere served up at breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper; every time you open your mouth you partake of it, and all day long you are compelled to burn lights, and, in addition to the fog, inhale the fumes from gas, candle, or lamp, which have no more chance of escape than you have, so burn on dim, yellow, and sulkily, as if the very lights needed all the warmth they could obtain, and thus confine themselves to illuminating the smallest possible space. The whole city seems covered with a crust, and all the light you can see beneath it appears as if struggling through the huge yellow basin it overspreads. You fancy that all the smoke which had ascended for years from the thousands of London chimneys, had fallen down all at once, after having rotted somewhere above the clouds; smelling as if it had been kept too long, and making you wheeze and sneeze, as if all the colds in the world were rushing into your head for warmth, and did not care a straw about killing a few thousands of people, so long as they could but lodge comfortably for a few hours anywhere. You blow like a grampus in a quicksand, with the keel of a seventy-four on his back, and get about as much fresh air as if you were in his situation: a pair of bellows with a hole in the side, through which you might cram your double fist, would make perfect music, when blown, compared to the noise of your own breathing. You seem as if you had swallowed six broken-winded horses; that they were inside of you alive and kicking; and, for the soul of you, you cannot get rid of one.

You step gingerly along, feeling your way beside the walls, windows, and doors, whenever you can, until at last you tumble headlong into some cellar—perhaps on the shoulders of the little cobbler who is at work below, and who chances to have his sharp awl uplifted at the moment; or, perhaps, it is an underground coal-shed, and you alight on the back of the black-looking woman weighing coals, and double her up in her own scale—receiving, in return, a couple of black eyes from her husband. After a hearty drubbing, you escape once more into the street; and, as you cannot see a yard before you, break your shins over a milk-man's can, and upset the contents on the greasy pavement; he tries to collar you, but your blood is now up, and you give him a "straight arm," which sends him into the area, upsetting the fat cook as he falls. You then run for it, and come full butt against the "bow-window" of a respectable old gentleman, with whom you have a roll or two in the gutter, thankful that you did not fall on the other side, and stave in the shop-front. You shake yourself, and are glad that you are as you are—for a foot beyond where you fell there yawns an open grating, beneath which runs the huge sewer that empties itself into the Thames—and you wonder how many have slipped in during the day. You tumble into a heap of unslacked lime; but that you think nothing of, too thankful to find it was not a fire. You turn up what seems to be a court, to give yourself a rub-down, and run your head against a pail of whitewash, which hangs suspended from a ladder: the whole contents flow over you; and, before you can see where you are, you fall over a sweep, who is tying up his blanket of soot, roll into the midst of it, and come out a pretty picture—something like the inside of an old chimney, and the outside of a rough-cast wall, just mortared.

Some good Samaritan in the court takes pity on you by lending you a towel, and furnishing you with a pail of water, and you make the best of a bad job, by cleansing yourself as you can. This done, you sally out again, more cautious than ever—the deep yellow darkness meantime increasing: you proceed slowly, and feel every foot of your way, for seeing is out of the question beyond arm's-length. Cautiously you grope along by the board of a fishmonger's shop, on which lie three or four large black live lobsters; one with his claws open closes on your hand like a vice, and you run shrieking for very life. The fishmonger catches sight of the lobster dangling from your hand, and, believing you have stolen it, follows with a loud cry of "Stop thief!" He is brought up, with his head in the tar-barrel, at the front of his neighbour the oilman's door; and the monster, by being banged against the wall, having by this time loosed his hold, you go along writhing and groaning, and wondering what will next befall you.

Porters with heavy burthens, women and men with fish, water-cresses, &c., you run against every few minutes, and think nothing of that. Sometimes you are knocked down, then again it is their lot to fall, and finding that the average runs pretty fair for and against the feller and the fallen, you rest contented on that score—considering the running of the edges of half a dozen umbrellas into your mouth as so many little ones in. If you mistake a dimly-lighted shop-front for some turning, and chance to shove your head through a pane of glass, all you can do is to walk as quietly on as if nothing were amiss—two strides and you are in safety, and as far out of sight as if buried in Egyptian darkness; and they are sure to seize the first unfortunate fellow they can lay hands upon, who might have been just as likely to have made the mistake as yourself; to know which is of some comfort. That two or three dogs have run full gallop between your legs and thrown you down as many times, are accidents too common to need recording. As for your watch, that of course went before you had walked one hundred yards—you saw the fellow's arm that dragged it out of your pocket, and that was all; it was a jerk amid the deep fog, a rush, in which your nose came against a dead wall, and by the time you had rubbed the grazed tip a little, you thought that you might as well hunt for a needle in a bottle of hay, as attempt to follow the thief in that dusky, woolly, and deceptive light.

With great difficulty, and after many enquiries, you find a tavern; for you know no more than the man-in-the-moon what part of London you are in. You enter a dim cheerless room without a fire, in which the gas burns faintly, as if unable to pierce the fleecy fog which surrounds it. You wonder whether the peg on which you hang your hat would bear your weight; and, as you lay hold of the bell-rope, cannot help trying the strength of it: the height of the ceiling also catches your eye, and you marvel that more people do not hang themselves on such a day. The very poker in the fireless grate has a cold, clammy, and murderous look; and when the waiter enters, you fancy that he has just been cut down. You light a cigar, and begin to think a little better of matters, and to reckon how many glasses of hot brandy-and-water would throw you into a state of oblivion—that is, leave you dead drunk until the dawning of another day. These thoughts vanish with a second glass, and you again venture forth, resolved this time to get into an omnibus, should one be found bold enough to venture out on such a day. After waiting for some time, and hailing by mistake half-a-dozen coal-waggons and carriers' carts, you perceive an omnibus creeping by at a snail's pace; enter, and squeeze yourself into a seat beside the door. You cannot see to the top of it for the fog, so have no fear of your tailor recognising you, should he happen to be inside—one comfort out of so many evils. While you are sitting, and congratulating yourself that you have escaped so well, up comes a cab-horse with his head through the open door, and his hot nostrils on your face. A few rough compliments are exchanged between the cab-driver and the conductor, during which something is said about the glanders, which haunts you for days after; the more so through your nose being red and raw, by grazing it against the wall when the thief ran away with your watch. To what quarter the omnibus is going gives you no concern, for you are glad to get anywhere to be out of the way on such a day. Great, however, is your indignation, after having been carried some three-score yards, to find that you are at the Cross Keys, in Fleet-street, having got in at the corner of Bride-court, and that the omnibus goes no further. You pay your threepence with a protest, and are thankful that you cannot see the passengers, who are laughing at you. You have, however, the satisfaction of seeing a heavy old gentleman plant one foot into a basket of oranges on the edge of the pavement, and that puts you into a little better humour, especially when, at the next step, he plunges his head into the window of a book-shop, and knocks down the middle of three rows of richly-bound volumes, besides smashing no end of panes of glass.

On such a day, the man who milks his cow in the street is compelled to lay hold of her tail, for fear of losing sight of her; while the butcher-boy who carries out meat is often minus a joint or two when he reaches the door at which his orders ought to have been delivered. Should such a day be Smithfield Market, all the cellar-flaps in the little by-streets are left open, in the hopes of catching a few stray sheep, and having a stock of mutton for nothing: should a prize bullock tumble in, they make no bones of him, but salt down what is left, and bless the fog for supplying them with so much excellent beef.

A stranger to London, when the fog sets in at night, and he looks upon it for the first time, fancies his apartments filled with smoke, and begins by throwing open his doors and windows—thus making bad worse, by destroying all the warm air in the rooms. Even one well accustomed to the ins and outs of our far-stretching city is strangely deceived in distance, and by the size objects assume, as they loom in dim and gigantic dimensions through the heavy fog. The gas-lamps appear as if placed three-story high, unless you stand close beneath them, for what light they emit is nearly all thrown upward; while a cab comes heaving up (to appearance) as large as the huge caravan which Wombwell formerly used for the conveyance of his stupendous elephant. Once take a wrong turning, and you may consider yourself very fortunate if you ever discover the right road again within three hours; for the houses wear a different appearance, and the streets appear to be all at "sixes and sevens."

Although a real Londoner looks upon a dense December fog as a common occurrence, and lights up his premises with as little ceremony as he would do at the close of the day, yet, to one unused to such a scene, there is something startling in the appearance of a vast city wrapt in a kind of darkness which seems neither to belong to the day nor the night, at the mid-noon hour, while the gas is burning in the windows of long miles of streets. The greatest marvel, after all, is that so few accidents happen in this dim, unnatural light, in the midst of which business seems to go on as usual, and would do, we believe, were the whole of London buried in midnight darkness at noonday, which would only be looked upon as a further deepening of the overhanging gloom. The number of lighted torches which are carried and waved at the corners and crossings of the streets add greatly to the wild and picturesque effect of the scene, as they flash redly upon the countenances of the passengers, and, in the distance, have the effect of a city enveloped in a dense mass of smoke, through which the smouldering flames endeavour in vain to penetrate.

During a heavy fog many accidents occur on the river, through barges running foul of each other, or vessels coming athwart the bridges—for there is no seeing the opening arch from the rock-like buttress, as the whole river looks like one huge bed of dense stagnant smoke, through which no human eye can penetrate. If you lean over the balustrades of the bridge, you cannot see the vessel which may at that moment be passing beneath, so heavy is the cloudy curtain which covers the water. At such times the steam-boats cease running, and rest quietly at their moorings, for the man at the wheel would be unable to see half the length of his vessel. Sometimes a steamer, coming up the river, takes a fancy to a shorter cut, by trying to clear Blackwall Reach, and come overland through the Marshes below Greenwich, or by running her head into the Isle of Dogs, where she lies aground until the next tide.

Many lives have been lost through foot-passengers mistaking the steps at the foot of some of the bridges for the opening of the bridge itself, and, ere they were aware of it, rolling head-foremost into the river. Strong iron-railings have been erected during the last few years, and have put an end to such dreadful accidents: at the foot of Blackfriars Bridge, many, we have heard, thus lost their lives.

At this time the pavement is greasy, and, though you keep lifting up your legs, you are hardly positive whether or not you are making any progress. You seem to go as much backward as forward; and some old Cockneys do aver that the surest way of reaching Temple Bar from Charing Cross would be to start off with your face turned towards King Charles's statue, to walk away manfully without once turning your



CHRISTMAS-EVE IN YORKSHIRE—DRAWN BY DODGSON—(SEE PAGE 418.)

head, and that, by the end of three hours, you would be pretty sure of reaching the point aimed at, should you not be run over.

BRIGHTON FISHERMEN CAROL SINGING.

In concluding our Christmas article, we must introduce a group of Brighton Fishermen Singing Carols, from a sketch by Mr. Hine, together with the following notice, which he has also furnished:—

The fishermen of Brighton are said to be the descendants of a party of Spanish refugees, who settled there in the reign of Elizabeth, and were presented by her with certain land, for drying nets and other purposes connected with fisheries. Some of the names most common among them—as Mighell, Gunn, Jaspar—are also said to be written Miguel, Juan, Gaspard, &c. in the older parish records. Be this as it may, it is

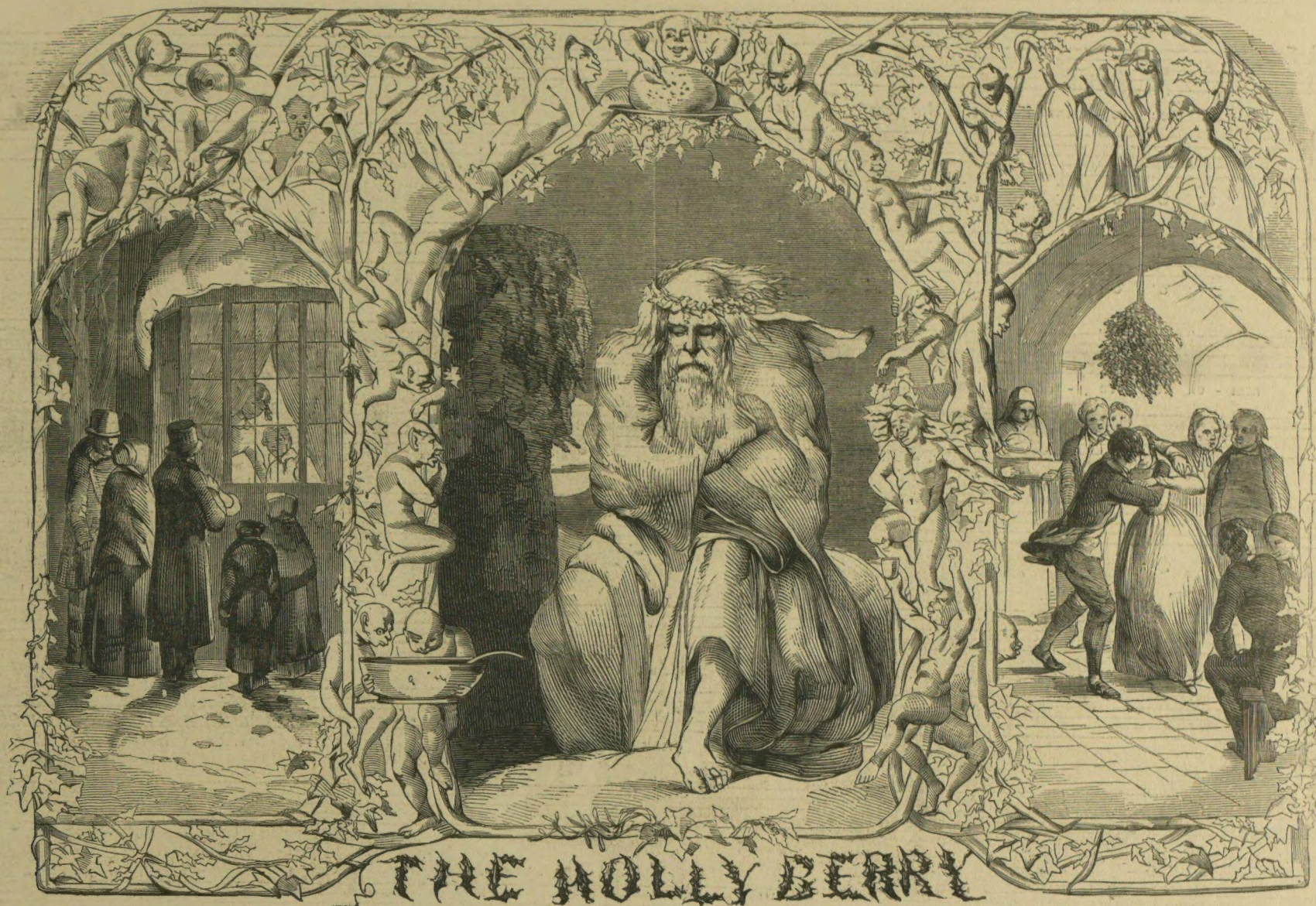
certain that they possess characteristics in feature and custom not met with amongst other classes in the town, or amid the peasantry in the neighbourhood. Black eyes and hair, and a clear brown complexion, are common amongst them, and seem to favour the idea of their southern origin. About twenty years ago, when the Old Steyne (to which they claim a traditional right) was about to be enclosed by iron railings, they drew to the contested ground some of their heaviest mackarel boats, capstans, &c., and armed with oars, spars, axes, and other implements of their trade, placed themselves in battle array to resist the proposed encroachment—pleading the rights granted to them originally by Queen Elizabeth. Nor was it until the authorities had admitted these claims, and promised that the gates should be made wide enough to admit the larger boats, in case of need, that they consented to allow the work to be completed.

Although uncouth in manners, they are industrious and inoffensive, holding but little intercourse, except in the way of business, with the townspeople, whom they generally designate "furringers" (*Anglice* foreigners). Their prevailing weakness is one for beer, and, under its influence, they sometimes become rather uproarious; yet, as they live, make love, marry, and fight amongst themselves, other classes of the community are not much affected by their peculiarities. The present festive season has the effect, however, of relaxing for a time their exclusive prejudices; and, forming themselves into groups of carol-singers—or, as they term themselves, "wassailers"—they enter the hotels and private dwelling-houses, and there sing their ancient carols.

After the lapse of nearly three centuries, they may be fairly considered to belong to England; and happy we are to make honourable mention of them in our Christmas columns.



CHRISTMAS CAROL SINGING, BY BRIGHTON FISHERMEN.—DRAWN BY HINE.



A CHRISTMAS CHIME.

WORDS BY THOMAS MILLER.

MUSIC BY JOHN BARNETT.

Allegretto con spirito.

f *p*

cres. *ff* *ff*

Gone are the sum - mer hours, The birds have left their bowers; While the hol - ly true re - tains his hue, Nor

chang - es like the flowers. Gone are the sum - mer hours, The birds have left their bowers; While the

pp

hol - ly true re - tains his hue, Nor *f*chang-es like the flowers. *p*On his

arm - ed leaf re - po - ses The ber - ries tinged like ro - ses; For he's e - ver seen in red and green While

ad lib. **** CHORUS.**

grim old Win - ter doz - es. Then drink to the hol - ly ber - ry With hey down, hey down

Then drink to the hol - ly ber - ry With hey down, hey down

colla voce *f*

der - ry; The mis - tle - toe we'll pledge al - so, And at Christ - mas all be mer - ry, at Christ - mas all be

der - ry; The mis - tle - toe we'll pledge al - so, And at Christ - mas all be mer - ry, merry, all, all be

p *cres.* *f*

mer - ry, at Christ - mas all be mer - ry.

mer - ry, mer - ry, all, all be mer - ry.

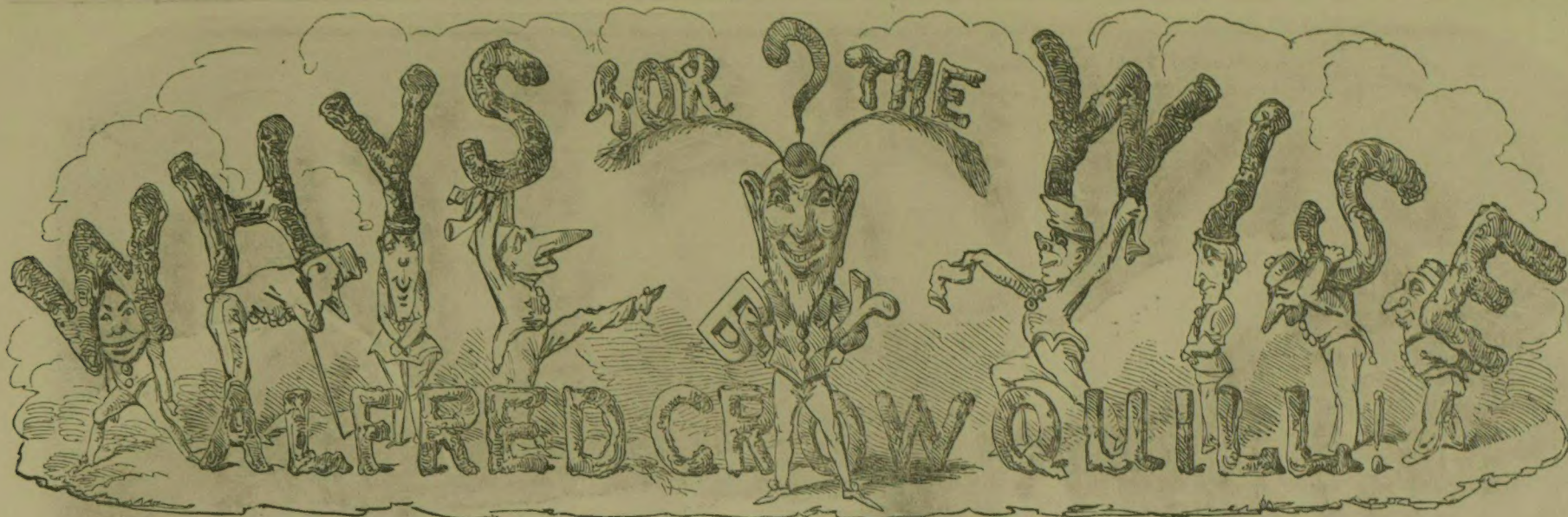
piu lento *ff*

2.
Above all cold affections,
Like pleasant recollections,
The ivy grows, and a deep veil throws
O'er all Time's imperfections;
The mould'ring column screening,
The naked gateway greening,
While the falling shrine it doth entwine
Like a heart that's homeward leaning.
Then drink to the holly-berry
With hey down, hey down derry;
The mistletoe we'll pledge also,
And at Christmas all be merry.

3.
We read in ancient story,
How the Druids in their glory
March'd forth of old, with hooks of gold,
To forests dim and hoary;
The giant oak ascended,
Then from its branches rended
The mistletoe, long long ago,
By maidens fair attending.
Then drink to the holly-berry
With hey down, hey down derry;
The mistletoe we'll pledge also,
And at Christmas all be merry.

4.
Each thorp and grange surrounding,
The waits to music bounding,
Aroused the cook, that her fire might smoke
Ere the early cock was sounding.
For all the land was merry,
And rang with "Hey down derry."
While in castle-hall and cottage small
There glitter'd the holly-berry.
Then drink to the holly-berry
With hey down, hey down derry;
The mistletoe we'll pledge also,
And at Christmas all be merry.

** In the absence of a Chorus, the upper notes of the top line may be sung as a melody.



1. Why is this man like the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS?



2. Why is this like a Prime Minister?



3. Why can you only make half-a-sovereign with that which represents a sovereign?



4. Why is this like the present political arrangements?



5. Why is this like a London gent?



6. Why ought he to keep this hat, although it does not fit him?



7. Why is this like a lawyer?



8. Why is this like a divinity?



9. Why would this make a good jockey?



10. Why is this like China?



11. Why is this like a notice of a house to let?



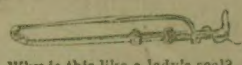
12. Why is this like Louis Napoleon?



13. Why is this like prudence?



14. Why is this superior to Cobden?



15. Why is this like a lady's seal?



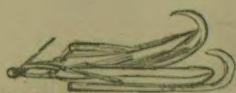
16. Why is this like a counterpane?



17. Why is this like Bulwer's last novel?



18. Why is this like a successful opposition?



19. Why are these skates like gruel?



20. Why is this, although the giver of courage to others, a great coward?



21. Why does this always claim precedence?



22. Why is this opera-hood like a bad husband?



23. Why ought this man never to be snubbed for looking after the girls?



24. Why is this like an ambitious man?



25. Why is this like England?



26. Why is this like a Bank clerk at one o'clock?



27. Why is this like your wife in a passion?



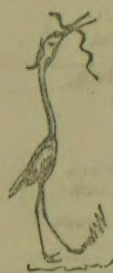
28. Why is this like a man offering you a ten-pound note?



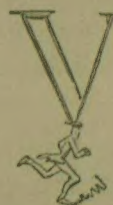
29. Why is this like a rich man?



30. Why ought the donkey never to be a creditor?



31. Why does this show the folly of accommodation?



32. Why is this like a creditor?



33. Why is this like a King?



34. Why is this like a negative?



35. Why is he certain of results?



36. Why is she like a man used to get drunk?



37. Why is this like the Prince of Wales?



38. Why is this not fit to commence an action with?



39. Why is this like ignorance?



40. Why is this like Turner's "Venice"?



41. Why is this like Rothschild?



42. Why is this like a good General?



43. Why does this man never do?



44. Why is this man like a cat?



45. Why is this like love?



46. Why is this like an inconstant?



47. Why is this like Jenny Lind?



48. Why are these bellows like slander?



49. Why is Cupid like an overseer?



50. Why is this an emblem of man's continual errors?



51. Why is this like the endeavour to discover the Pole?



52. Why is this like charity?



53. Why is this like Louis Philippe?



54. Why is it useless to send this bird a bushel of beans?



55. Why is this like Christmas?



56. Why is this like Ireland?



"THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI."—PAINTED BY RUBENS.—(SEE NEXT PAGE.)

THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

PAINTED BY RUBENS.

The stable and the manger hide
His glory from His own: but these,
Though strangers, His resplendent rays
Of majestic divine have spy'd.

Gold, frankincense, and myrrh they give,
And worshipping Him plainly show
That unto Him they all things owe,
By whose free gift it is they live.

CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.

This magnificent picture, unquestionably the finest of its class which Rubens ever painted, is in the Royal Museum of Madrid. In this instance, as well as in that of the celebrated picture in the Capitol of the Escorial, the Virgin, contrary to all custom, is not seated, but standing; and, in the words of Dr. Waageen, "the heavenly beauty of the features, and, still more, the dignity of the form, with the benign and graceful inclination of the body, render it exceedingly attractive."

The two paintings present other corresponding points of excellence. The Virgin is a tall, dignified figure; the rays of glory just touch her head. Of the work in the Escorial, Madame de Humboldt observes:—"The picture is so beautiful, in such noble keeping, and so free from that disagreeable voluptuousness which characterises Rubens's females in general, that it can be contemplated and dwelt on with delight, although hanging on the same wall with a Raphael and a Guido; while it possesses all the advantages which belonged so exclusively to the manner of Rubens—the most blooming flesh tints, the loveliest colouring."

Rubens painted the "Adoration of the Magi, or Three Kings," before he began his journey to Italy, in the year 1600. He is said to have added the right portion to the picture on one of his visits to Madrid, and also to have introduced his own portrait.

"The Adoration" has been commemorated in many a sweet and fervid strain of poetry—olden and contemporary. George Wither has the following Song:—

That so thy blessed birth, oh Christ,
Might through the world be spread
about,
Thy Starre appeared in the East,
Whereby the Gentiles found thee out;
And, off'ring Thee Myrrh, Incense, Gold,
Thy threefold Office did unfold.

Sweet Jesus, let that Starre of Thine,
Thy Grace, which guides to find out
Thee,
Within our hearts for ever shine,
That Thou of us found out maist bee:
And Thou shalt be our King, therefore,
Our Priest, and Prophet evermore.

The pious Bishop Heber has left us these impassioned lines:—

Bright beaming through the sky,
Burst in full blaze the Day-spring from on high;
Earth's utmost isles exulted at the sight,
And crowding nations drank the orient light.
Lo, star-led chiefs Assyrian odours bring,
And bending Magi seek their infant King!
Mark'd ye where, hovering o'er His radiant head,
The dove's white wings celestial glory shed?
Daughter of Zion! virgin Queen! rejoice!
Clap the glad hand and lift th' exulting voice!
He comes, but not in regal splendour drest,
The haughty diadem, the Tyrian vest;
Not arm'd in flame, all-glorious from afar,
Of hosts the chieftain, and the lord of war:
Messiah comes! in furious discord cease;
Be peace on earth before the Prince of Peace!
Disease and anguish feel His blest controul;
And howling fiends release the tortured soul;
The beams of gladness hell's dark caves illumine,
And Mercy broods above the distant gloom.

The following passage is from "Lines suggested by a Picture of the Adoration of the Magians," by Richard C. Trench:—

But of all this scanty state
That upon His steps might wait,
Dearest are those Magian Kings,
With their far-brought offerings.
From what region of the morn
Are ye come, thus travel-worn,
With those boxes pearl-embosom'd,
Caskets rare, and gifts of cost?
While your swarth attendants wait
At the stable's outer gate,
And the camels lift their head
High above the lowly shed;
Or are seen, a long-drawn train,
Winding down into the plain,
From below the light-blue line
Of the hills in distance fine,
Dear for your own sake, whence are ye?
Dearest for the mystery
That is round you—on what skies
Gazing, saw you first arise,
Thro' the darkness, that clear star,
Which has marshall'd you so far,
Even unto this strawly tent,

Dancing up the Orient?
Shall we name you Kings indeed,
Or is this our idle creed?
Kings of Seba, with the gold
And the incense long foretold?
Would the Gentle world by you
First-fruits pay of tribute due;
Or have Israel's scatter'd race,
From their unknown hiding-place,
Sent to claim their part and right
In the Child new-born to-night?
* * * * *
Thus so soon as far apart
From the proud world in our heart,
As in stable dark defiled,
There is born the Eternal Child.
May to Him the Spirit's kings
Bear their choicest offerings;
May the Affections, Reason, Will,
Wait upon Him to fulfil
His behests, and early pay
Homage to His natal day.

For the ready quotation of these illustrative extracts, our acknowledgment is due to the Editor of a seasonable volume, just published, entitled "Christmas Tyde," containing about one hundred "Festive Hymnes," and "Carols," Odes, and Spiritual Songs, classified in Three Parts—the Advent, the Birth, and the Infancy, in addition to Descriptive Pieces on subjects associated with Christmas Tyde; from the earliest poets to those of our own time. The inscription page bears the following:—

To DAME EMMA DOROTHEA, wife of Sir FRANCIS ASTLEY, Bart., these Memorials of Christmas are presented, in remembrance of her love for such hallowed themes, and her appreciative enjoyment of Christian art.

The book is produced in Mr. Pickering's characteristic style of appropriateness; printed in olden type, and illustrated from one of Raffaele's masterpieces.

NEW MUSICAL PUBLICATIONS.

SACRED MUSIC.

1. CHURCH ANTHEMS. Composed by Dr. W. R. BEXFIELD. J. A. Novello.
2. THE PSALTER NOTES, and Accompanying Harmonies to the Psalter Notes. By the Rev. THOMAS HELMORE, M.A. J. A. Novello.
3. CHRISTMAS CAROLS, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4. J. Masters.
4. LAST NIGHT I LAY A-SLEEPING. Composed by H. J. GAUNTLETT, Mus. Doc. J. Masters.

The improvement of Ecclesiastical Music is evidently occupying the attention of the admirers of the sacred school of composition. To elevate the character of the music, to improve the execution of the musical service in our cathedrals, and to promote congregational singing in parts in our churches, many eminent professors and amateurs are now making strenuous efforts. In the provinces, religious art is more cultivated, and is making greater progress, than in the metropolitan diocese. We were much struck during the last Norwich Festival with the careful rendering of the services at the Cathedral in that town. Mr. Buck, the organist, takes especial pains in the important matter, and the majesty of the musical service is maintained by his discipline. One of his pupils, Dr. Bexfield, organist of St. Helen's, in the City, appears desirous of emulating the example of his respected master. A volume of Anthems, which have appeared from time to time in a detached form, are now before us, and prove the musical acquirements of this young and rising musician. In this collection there are seven full anthems—three in five parts, three in four, and one in eight parts. The words of the first anthem, "Hear my Prayer," from the Psalms, have been before treated, by Kent: it was the anthem performed at the funeral of the Princess Charlotte. The anthem, "Hide thy face from my sins," in four parts, has also been treated by Farrant. Dr. Bexfield follows in the wake of Croft, Boyce, Greene, &c., preserving the grave and devotional style and characteristics of our peculiarly national school of anthem writing. He has left nothing to the imagination of the organ-players in the accompaniments, a line being devoted to the pedal passages. Dr. Bexfield displays a feeling for graceful and expressive harmony; his knowledge of contrapuntal

treatment is evident, his symphonies are well designed, and the vocal parts move freely and flowingly. The canon in the "Glory to God" is a satisfactory specimen of Dr. Bexfield's erudition; and, as an upholder of the English sacred school, his anthems are deserving of every praise.

The work of the Rev. T. Helmore (Priest in Ordinary to the Queen, Precentor of St. Mark's College, Chelsea, and Master of the Children of H. M. Chapels Royal) is after the manner of "Marbeck's Prayer-Book, Noted," every syllable being set to a note or notes. In Marbeck only general directions being given for the chanting of the Psalms, the present undertaking supplies the gap. The ancient notation has been followed—easily understood with the perusal of Mr. Helmore's preliminary explanations. For the use of churches in which there is no organ, or where harmonised vocal music is preferred to the unison, a second book, entitled "Accompanying Harmonies," has been published. The rev. author devotes the profits of these very useful and praiseworthy publications to the Metropolitan Church-Building Fund.

The Carols comprise "Once, in Royal David's City," "As Joseph was a-walking," "Upon the Snow-clad Earth without," and "There were Shepherds once abiding." Dr. Gauntlett's carol is an original composition, the words of which are by the author of "The Island Choir." The composer and organist is one of the most distinguished theorists and writers on musical matters this country has produced, and as a lecturer has no rival. His works on congregational singing have exercised the most beneficial influence.

THE MUSICAL ANNUALS.

1. ALBUM JULIEN, 1850. Edited by THOMAS BAKER. Jullien and Co.
2. THE MUSICAL BIJOU: an Album of Music and Poetry for 1850. Edited by F. H. BURNEY. D'Almaine and Co.

Jullien's musical library has produced, as usual, a splendid album, gorgeous in the illustrating department, and rich in musical attractions. The covers in gold and colours, with the presentation page, are elaborate and tasteful. Brandard's frontispieces, lithographed in colours, are portraits of Jetty Treffz as *Arline*, in Balfe's "Bohemian Girl," and Sontag as *Desdemona*. The association of the two German artistes is scarcely fair, Sontag being infinitely superior to the Viennese vocalist, who, in fact, cannot be even compared with many of our own native singers. There are sixteen vocal and fifteen instrumental pieces. Amongst the former are two airs (one from the "Prophète") by Meyerbeer, three ballads by Edward Loder, two by Angelina, two by Lamoureux, two by T. Baker (the editor), and the others are by Balfe, Lindpaintner, H. Smart, Linley, Koch-Albert (Jullien). The words of these compositions are written by Mrs. Corbould, Mrs. Hemans, Messrs. E. J. Gill, A. Crowquill, G. Linley, W. H. Bellamy, Palgrave Simpson, Shirley Brooks, Lowe, and A. Waymark. The instrumental works include a fantasia, "Solitude," by W. V. Wallace, the "Prophète Quadrilles," the "Masaniello Quadrille," the "Drum Polka," the "Prophète Waltz," "Palmyra Quadrille," by Jullien, with other dance pieces by König, Barret, Lavenue, and by a son of Prince Metternich. With the names we have enumerated, it may be readily concluded that there is much pleasing music in the selection.

The "Bijou" maintains its fame as the gem of musical illustration. The covers, the frontispiece, the title and border, and presentation plate, printed at the chromo-lithographic press, of D'Almaine and Co., have been magnificently executed, from designs by eminent artists. There are eight illustrations for the musical *morceaux*; some of the drawings are graceful and characteristic; and the whole is of average merit. The vocal contributors are G. H. Rodwell, Stephen Glover, A. Lee, F. N. Crouch, C. Morton, A. Wilson, and W. Palmer; the poetry is by Mrs. Crawford, H. Sinclair, L. Rolfe, E. J. Gill, J. F. Smith, and J. E. Carpenter; the instrumental writers are Ricardo Linter, S. Glover, A. Norman, Herr Lenz, E. Schwartz, and H. Bardoni. There are fourteen vocal and eight instrumental pieces. The "Musical Bijou" is altogether a splendid annual.

VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC.

1. WINTER'S WARM FIRESIDE. Music by W. T. WRIGHTON. C. and R. Ollivier.
2. FLEUR DE MARIE. Music by G. BARKER. Cocks and Co.
3. THE LAST MEETING. By LINTER. D'Almaine and Co.
4. VICTORIA AND OUR NATIVE LAND. By S. NELSON. Cocks and Co.
5. HUNGARIAN SERENADE. By M. A. YOUNG. Addison and Co.
6. THE SISTER ISLE. By MR. C. BEALE and SIGNOR LANZA. C. Beale.
7. THE LITTLE MOLES. Poetry by C. MACKAY, Esq., Music by G. TALHURST. J. Blackman.
8. COME, COME TO THE WILLOW DELL. Vocal Duet. By G. HERBERT RODWELL. Cocks and Co.
9. LITTLE SONGS FOR LITTLE SINGERS, easy to sing and easy to play. LITTLE PIECES FOR LITTLE PLAYERS, arranged to suit small hands. G. H. Davidson.
10. COME AWAY, LOVE, SPRING. By F. HINSBURY. Addison and Co.
11. WHY DO YOU WATCH THE LONE, LONE DEEP? Duet. By STEPHEN GLOVER. Cocks and Co.
12. GUYLOTT'S FAMILY PRECEPTOR. Webb.

No. 1 is a seasonable song, in four flats, illustrated by the interior of an old baronial hall, with a Christmas party round the yule-log, welcoming the arrival of the pudding. After such an appeal, the charm of music would be irresistible.—No. 2, in four flats, three-four time, is an expressive melody. The words are by Mr. G. J. Cook, and were suggested by the engraving of "Fleur de Marie," after she had taken the veil.—No. 3 is one of the series of the legends of Italy. The poetry is by Mrs. Crawford; and the music is graceful, and well adapted for a contralto voice.—No. 4, Mr. Nelson's loyal effusion, the words by J. W. Lake, is adapted for public dinners.—The Serenade, No. 5, is elegant.—No. 6 is another national song, suggested by her Majesty's visit to Ireland.—No. 7 is a political ditty, the *réfrain* of which is, "Grub, little moles, grub underground—there's sunshine in the sky:" the words are racy and spirited, like all Mr. Mackay's songs for the people.—Mr. Rodwell's duet (No. 8) is fresh and pleasing.—The two volumes (No. 9) form divisions 17 and 18 of Davidson's *Musical Treasury*, and are well adapted for the rising generation—the "little dears" who are making early efforts to sing and play. The music is by the most eminent composers, nicely arranged for the juvenile students.—No. 10. The two songs by Mr. Kingsbury are smooth and melodious.—The duet (No. 11) is clever and musician-like.—No. 12, the "Family Preceptor," is an easy guide: it is not crowded with difficulties in the progressive lessons for the piano; and as a school-book to begin with the rudiments, has been carefully compiled.

DANCE MUSIC.

1. ALICE POLKA. DES WANDERERS LEBEWOL. MARCH OF THE ROYAL HORSE GUARDS. Composed by JOHANN STRAUSS. Cocks and Co.
2. THE MISSETOE SCHOTTISCHE, and THREE NEW POLKAS. By W. H. B. D'Almaine and Co.
3. THE BRUNSWICK POLKA. By Miss A. S. MOUNSEY. Charles and Robert Ollivier.
4. THE SKE-SERPENT POLKA. By ELLEN L. GLASCOCK. S. H. Webb.
5. THE MADRAS FUSILIER GALOP. By H. BRINLEY RICHARDS. Hammond.
6. A SET OF SIX WALTZES. By R. A. MORTON. Addison and Co.

The revolution effected in dance music by the compositions of Strauss and Lanner was noticed recently in our obituary of the former celebrated composer. Labitzsky, Musard, and Jullien have followed in the wake of the Viennese musicians, and now the present race of writers for dance purposes essay to imitate their predecessors in the use of inspiring themes, passionate melodies, caprice of rhythm, and *finesse* in the details. The Polka and the Waltz were placed in Strauss's coffin at his funeral; and the March—a very spirited one—was composed for his last *matinée musicale* in this country, last season; thus investing these works with a melancholy interest, independently of their musical merits. The other compositions we have enumerated above have all considerable merit, particularly the "Schottische," with the inviting title of the "Missetoe"—certainly a heart-jumping as well as feet-stirring title. The composer, W. H. B., was the writer of the Christmas Polka, which appeared in the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS last year. His subjects are catching and pleasing; and the devotees of the light fantastic toe will be gratified with the sparkling and well-accented polkas which accompany the "Missetoe Schottische."

CHRISTMAS BOOKS.

CHRISTMAS, this year, has not produced the usual crop of gift-books. There is a blight upon these ephemera: the public is weary of inanities, whether presented in the form of Books of Beauty, or of imitations of Chimes and Christmas Carols. The Annuals are all but defunct. The once abundant supply of Keepsakes, Amulets, and Forget-Me-Nots has begun to fail, and the buds have dropped off, one by one, never to bloom again. Mr. Dickens's stories have no longer the gloss of novelty; and such a swarm of imitators have rushed into the field after him—not because they have had merit or talent, but because he has been successful—that the very name of a Christmas Book has become distasteful. Publishers, in default of other attractions at Christmas time, have taken to re-printing standard works; and, by the aid of fine paper and type, and the elegances of binding, have managed to make old friends look better than new, and to provide gift-books suitable for all tastes. Possibly, at some future time, novelty will again be in request, and a new form of annual story-book, or poem, will bud forth amid the winter snows, and draw the coin from the pockets of those who wish to make literary presents. Until that time, we suppose we must be contented with what we have got.

Fisher's *Drawingroom Scrap-Book*—the oldest and most gorgeous of the Annuals—has been already noticed in our columns; but we return to it again, in order that the subject of Christmas Books may not be rendered incomplete in this place by its omission from among its fellows. It appears this year under the editorship of Mr. Charles Mackay, who has succeeded the Hon. Mrs. Norton in that somewhat difficult post. In his hands we do not think its usefulness or its beauty likely to be diminished. The following verses afford a fair sample of its poetry:—

THE FLAG OF ENGLAND.

Raise high the Flag of England—

The banner of the brave!
But not to desolate the world,
To conquer or enslave;
And not for civil warfare,
As in the days of yore,
When British steel beneath its folds
Was bathed in British gore.
Each flaunting rag,
A nation's flag,
May boast of deeds like these;
But we men,
The free men,
Claim nobler victories.

Raise high the flag of England!

if mid the battle crush
Its only triumphs had been won,
An Englishman might blush.
If by aggressive armies
Its brightest fame was bought,
We'd groan to think our fathers wrong,
And deem its glories nought;
We'd weep to own
Our power misgrown,
And to the world proclaim,
That we men,
The free men,
Would earn a better fame.

Raise high the flag of England—

The meteor of the fight!
That never flash'd on battle-field
Except to lead the right;
That never graced the triumphs
Of Cæsars, or their hosts;
Or carried rapine and revenge
To unoffending coasts.
Unfurled it high
In purity—
The flag without a stain!
That we men,
The free men,
May swear by it again.

Wherever it has floated,
Upon the sea or land,
There world-adorning Trade has stretch'd
Her civilising hand;
There Enterprise has ventured
Her argosies high-piled;
There Science strew'd the earth with flowers,
And kindly Knowledge smiled.
O'er deeds like these,
In storm and breeze,
Our flag has been unfurled;
And we men,
The free men,
Can show them to the world.

It led our sons undaunted,
With earnest souls sublime,
To track the bounds of earthly space
Through every zone and clime.
Through savage lands death-haunted,
Where southern oceans roll,
Through swamps and deserts of the line,
Or ice-fields of the Pole.
Wherever Trade
Or Science bade,
Discovery turned her prow,
That we men,
The free men,
Might glory in it now.

Be these thy triumphs ever,
Oh banner of our sires!
May never war unfurl thy cross
To gleam above her fires.
May civil strife ne'er plant thee
Upon the plain or hill,
But Peace, Discovery, Love, and Joy,
Exalt and wave thee still.
O'er smiling downs,
And prosperous towns,
Float, banner, as of yore,
That we men,
The free men,
May love thee evermore.

The *Keepsake* is almost the sole survivor of its class. It bears this year upon its title-page the name of the Countess of Blessington, but was only partially edited by that lamented lady. The preface gives the following modest account, by her successor, of the circumstances under which her task was undertaken:—

"For some months previous to her lamented death, Lady Blessington had been contemplating the completion of this work, and had designed for its pages one of her latest productions. When the career of her under whose brilliant auspices this periodical had so often appeared was suddenly brought to a close, the proprietor, unwilling to keep back a volume which he felt was invested with so peculiar and melancholy an interest, ventured to trust its conclusion to one who, however deficient she may be in those qualifications which so eminently fitted Lady Blessington to produce a work of this nature, has at least had the advantage of being thoroughly acquainted with the system of management pursued by the late editress; who had even assisted in her labours, and who was

in communication with the contributors whose names—many of them long known and highly esteemed in the literary world—appear in the following pages. Having bestowed her best attention on the present volume of the 'Keepsake,' she trusts it will be allowed to bear comparison with its predecessors; or that, if it be found in any degree wanting, the very peculiar circumstances under which it was brought out will be accepted by an indulgent public in extenuation of the deficiency."

The engravings are of various orders of merit. Among our favourites are "May Cumming," by J. B. Smith, a beautiful study of a Scottish lass, with her water-pitcher, standing at a mountain rill; "Elfrida," by E. Corbould; and the "Exile's Wife," by T. F. Marshall.

The list of contributors is large, but not eminent, and includes a swarm of the minnows of literature, with only one or two tritons among them. In the latter class we must rank Barry Cornwall and Mrs. S. C. Hall. Barry Cornwall's contribution is the most striking in the book: rough, but vigorous—prosaic, yet poetical—homely and affecting in its way—and with a touch of real tragedy:—

VERDICT, "FOUND DEAD."

About ten years ago, a paragraph appeared in some of the daily newspapers, giving an account of an inquest held on the body of a young woman "found dead" in some obscure street or lane in London. The body was discovered frightfully emaciated, scantily clothed, and in a poor garret, which was entirely destitute of every article of furniture, comfort, or otherwise, except a few ragged love-letters, which she had preserved through every privation. According to the evidence, she had been at one time a person of considerable beauty, and had evidently died of hunger.

'Twas on a dark December's evening,
Loud the blast, and bitter cold;
Downwards came the whirling waters,
Deep and black the river roll'd;
Not a dog beneath the tempest—
Not a beggar upon his beat;
Wind and rain, and cold and darkness,
Swept through ev'ry desert street.

Muffled to the teeth, that evening
I was struggling in the storm,
Through pestilential lanes and hungry alleys;
Suddenly, an ancient form
Peep'd from out a gloomy doorway,
And, with trembling croak, it said,
"In the left-hand empty garret
You will find a woman—dead!"

"Never stepp'd a finer creature,
When she was a simple maid;
But she did like many others—
Loved a man and was betray'd.
I have seen her in her carriage
Riding, diamonds in her hair;
And I've seen her starving (starving!)
Do you hear?, and now—she's there!"

Up the worn and slippery staircase
With a quicken'd pulse I sprung;
Famine, filth, and mean despair
Round about the darkness hung;
No kind vision met my glances—
Friend or helper of the poor,
So the crazy room I enter'd,
And look'd down upon the floor.

There, on the rough and naked boards,
A long, gaunt, wasted figure lay,
Murder'd in its youth by Hunger—
All its beauty—wrinkled clay.
Life's poor wants had left her nothing—
Clothes nor fuel, food nor bed;
Nothing, save some ragged letters,
Whereon lay the ghastly head!

Nothing! yet, what more could Pity
Crave for one about to die,
Than sweet words from one she worshipp'd
(Sweet, though every word a lie)?
In the morning of her pleasure,
In the midnight of her pain,
They were all her wealth, her comfort,
Treasured, ay, and not in vain.

And with her they now lie mouldering—
And a date upon a stone
Telleth where (to end the story)
Love's poor outcast sleeps alone.
Mourn not; for at length she sleepeth
The soft slumber of the dead,
Resting on her loved love-letters—
Last, fit pillow for her head!

Mrs. Hall's story of the "Wild Rose of Rosstrevor" is beautifully and simply told. We wish it were not too long for quotation in our columns. The other articles are of the *ultra-mediocre* school, and require no further notice.

The *Court Album* is a nondescript volume, neither annual nor periodical, and looking as little like a Christmas book in anything save gilding and binding, as can well be imagined. It contains fourteen portraits of the female aristocracy, with short prose notices, written *at*, rather than upon, the lovely subjects. The ladies whose portraits are presented are, the Marchioness of Ormonde, Miss Georgina Lygon, Miss Edith Mercer, Lady Clementina Villiers, Lady Elizabeth Villiers, Lady Adela Ibbetson, the Countess of Essex, Mrs. Charles Cavendish, Miss Ogilvie, Princess Nicholas Esterhazy, the Viscountess Drumlanrig, Lady Frances Russell, the Hon. Caroline Dawson, and the Hon. Matilda Paget. The English aristocracy, that can boast among its members such flowers of loveliness as these, deserves the character it has acquired, of being the handsomest aristocracy in the world. The letterpress which accompanies the exquisite portrait of the fascinating Princess Esterhazy will show how little this beautiful volume owes to its editor, and how difficult it is to write aside of a subject—at it, and not of it. The extract affords a fair sample of the literature of the volume:—

PRINCESS NICHOLAS ESTERHAZY.

For the world—we mean the world which lies without the latitude and longitudes of informed society—the idea connected with the name of Esterhazy is quite curious enough to warrant its being transcribed and pinned down upon paper, as one selects a specimen of entomological eccentricity. The leading notion is "something about diamonds." Othello's barbarian estimate of the way to make a valuable world—"of one entire and perfect chrysolite" (a thought which always appeared to us as having slipped, by mistake, out of the part of *Shylock*), resembles the ordinary opinion in that matter. The tradition of the "jacket of jackets," so full of precious stones so previously appended, that "a thousand pounds' worth drop off every time its wearer puts it on," is as firmly fixed in the popular mind as the legend of the telescope-maker's mark half way up the south front of Somerset House—an object which all London believes is the watch of a man who was repairing the building, who fell, and who, being saved by his chain catching a nail, left the article as a "votive offering." Napoleon d'Abrantes did something towards confirming this faith when he wrote his lively narrative of the procession of the Fête Dieu, at Vienna. "One of the finest objects in this ceremony is the detachment of the Hungarian Guard, commanded by Prince Esterhazy. Nothing can give an idea of the pomp of this corps—nothing can make you understand the appearance of its Chief. All the diamonds of the house of Esterhazy, entailed thereon like an estate, sparkled that day on the Prince, as all those upon the house of Cadaval upon St. George's hat at Lisbon. His costume, which is the national Hungarian one, consists of a pelisse and loose cloak, each plate of which is of

fine pearls, and every button a diamond: his horse's martingale is one stream of diamonds." And then another legend is rife, which states that a Scotch nobleman, showing the ambassador his estate, said, "I have four thousand sheep." "But you have mentioned the number of my shepherds," was the reply. Uniting these ideas with a general impression of awe and admiration with which the brilliant career of a successful European diplomatist inspires the public, the result is, that any nobleman who for years may bear the name of Esterhazy, will be looked upon as the minister who ought to have been present when Aladdin's mother brought the baskets full of huge jewels to the Sultan, as such a counsellor would first have diplomatically arranged a wager of dropping alternate diamonds, stone against stone (as the Beggar of Bethnal-green did with money), for his daughter's hand; and would, secondly, have magnificently flung down showers of inestimable gems from his own treasure-house, enriching his master, and utterly discomfiting the base-born pretender to a Royal alliance.

And there may be something in public faith, after all—there usually is; for, "rich in roubles, diamonds, cash, and credit" as is the illustrious and most ancient house of Esterhazy, it is wealthy beyond all count in nobler jewels—intellect, high honour, and unswerving loyalty. It is even less necessary to add that the house of Esterhazy has been still further enriched by an alliance with the noble English family of Jersey.

The *Babes in the Wood*, a reprint of the touching old ballad, is a re-issue of a beautiful little volume that made its first appearance last year, and excited much admiration for the charming tenderness and simplicity of its illustrations. They are from the hand of the Marchioness of Waterford, and reflect much honour on her Ladyship's taste, feeling, and accomplishment. The book is quite a gem of typography and embellishment, and is sure to become a favourite wherever it is known. The illustrations have been executed by Mr. Brandard, from thirteen stones, so as to produce the requisite effect, without one touch of hand workmanship.

The *Book of Ruth* is issued by the same publisher. It is a black-letter reprint of that affecting book of Holy Writ, with profuse illustrations by the Lady Augusta Cadogan. The designs are very effective.

The *Episodes of Insect Life*, by Acheta Domestica, is not, strictly speaking, a Christmas book, but it is something better. It is a book for all seasons, and will be as welcome to all true lovers of nature in midsummer as in midwinter. Its design is a happy one. The author, or authoress (we think we are not wrong in attributing the work to a lady) enters into the closest arcana of insect life; and, by exaggerating their proportions in reference to the world in which they move, makes us acquainted with their habits in a manner as original as it is charming. There is no formidable array of scientific nomenclature to repel the reader—all is clear, simple, and intelligible, and we feel that in such companionship solitude is populous.

"With fairy-form'd and many-colour'd things
That innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life."

What, for instance, can be better than the opening chapter on the Lady-bird?

"THE LADY-BIRD OF OUR CHILDHOOD."

Give me leave
To eat my fill, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul surface of the infected leaf.

"Many who exterminate spiders as a matter of merit, crush earwigs without remorse, and hold black-beetles in abhorrence, look with involuntary kindness on the little red-beetle styled a Lady-bird. For this especial favour she stands indebted partly to her pretty spotted gown, and partly to her being associated with the earliest recollections of our childhood. A word or two, *en passant*, on nursery rhymes, on that one at least which is pertinent to our subject:—

'Lady-bird! Lady-bird! fly away home,
Your house is on fire and your children alone!'

Now, in reality, instead of flying to the rescue of her own innocents, her business is most probably to murder and devour a score of other innocents, clustered together on a hop or rose-leaf; or, in other words, to make a luscious meal of *Aphides* or Honey-dew Insects, of whom her Lady-birdship is exceedingly fond—fond as a wolf of a flock of sheep.

"So stands the fact; and the nursery fiction may, perhaps, in these matter-of-fact times, be impugned for giving a notion purely imaginary concerning the Lady-bird's 'house' and her 'children,' and her probable course and business when released from her captor's grasp. Yet what matters it? The simple couplet may implant a wrong notion, but that is soon corrected; and it may implant, also, a right feeling likely to abide. It urges to humanity at the expense of selfishness; to set at liberty the pretty prisoner, of which the childish captor is so proud, that it may go to the rescue of its distressed little ones. Such, at least, is the spirit in which we imagine this address to the Lady-bird to have been originally dictated to some little child long since grown grey and mouldered into earth.

"The Lady-bird, or *Coccinella*, has many claims upon our kindness in addition to those which it possesses as the favourite of our childhood. Of our manhood it is also the useful friend, however little we may so regard it; and it is, *par excellence*, a friend in all weathers. It greets us in early spring, enjoys the summer with us, stays by us through the fall of the leaf, and even in mid-winter often emerges from its hybernate retreat, as if on purpose to remind us of more cheerful seasons, past and to come. Perhaps on account of its hardihood—an endowment for which it is no doubt in some measure indebted to its highly varnished covering—the Lady-bird has acquired amongst our Catholic neighbours the appellations of *Vache à Dieu* and *Bête de la Vierge*, as though it were a creature especially favoured by providential care. These names, however, are somewhat more applicable if the insect be regarded as one of those little, but not unimportant agents whereby the kind Creator is accustomed to confer benefits; and that for such we are indebted to the *Coccinella* is a fact with which every gardener—every one at least who knows how to distinguish between friend and foe—is practically acquainted. He sees his rose trees and honeysuckles, and other favourites of his care, laden with blight insects (the *Aphides*, or Plant-lice, whose history we need not now repeat); and on finding their multitudes gradually thinned, he knows that he is mainly indebted for their riddance to exterminating Lady-birds, which, aided by two or three allies, confer on the hop-grower a similar benefit.

"By entomologists, the Lady-bird is regarded as a beautiful example of his favourite order of Beetles (*Coleoptera*); when the pencil of nature furnishes him with a rare or newly-coloured variety, he looks upon it as a prize. It was the striking prettiness of a black and yellow Lady-bird, added to its extraordinary vitality in flying away after an immersion of four-and-twenty hours in ardent spirits, which first attracted the attention of Kirby, and led him, for the amusement and benefit of thousands, to adopt the study of insects. Yet of the millions who are well enough acquainted, by sight, with this common Beetle, so gaily distinguished from the darker brethren of its order, how few know a single word about its history, or suspect that, besides being a pretty, it is a useful, little animal.

"Nearly everybody has a knowledge, more or less accurate, of the transformations undergone by Moths and Butterflies (the *Lepidoptera* of naturalists), but not many, perhaps, are aware that most other insects go through similar changes. Those of the Lady-bird are very curious; and the difference of form between its long flat figure in the first or *larva* stage of being, and its half-spherical shape as a winged Beetle, is scarcely less striking than that betwixt the Butterfly and the Caterpillar from which it has expanded."

The chapter on "Insect Magicians" affords another proof of the skill with which the author of this volume contrives to convey information:—

"INSECT MAGICIANS."

"Lo! at their fairy touch at once springs forth
A magic growth of seeming fruits and flowers,
Fair to the eye, and animate within
By more than vegetative life."

"The day approaches on which oak-apples, bearing their gilded honours, will perpetuate the memory of those their ancestral fruits, which hung, in company with a hunted Monarch, on the tree of Boscobel. Whether dressed in tinsel, or adorned by Nature's painting, these apples of Royalty are pretty things to look at; and against the coming anniversary (the 29th of May), which will bring them then within the reach of all, it may be worth inquiring whether they have aught within deserving notice; or whether, as with the Merry Monarch's self, they are to be estimated only for their outward bravery."

"Pleasant to the taste these fair fruits are not (as well we know by bitter experiences of childhood); so, not daring to bite, let us pull one of them asunder, or, dividing it with a knife, reveal its secrets. We now see, surrounded and bounded by spongy pulp, a set of cells, each with its solitary living occupant, for whose safe keeping, and that of his fellows, this fruit-like tenement was called into existence, not by the labours of a trifling artificer, but by the touch of a flying fairy. The insect tenants of these pulpy palaces are not unlike, in one condition of their being, to the scions of Royal houses. It is not improbable that before one of them has attained to the majority of its winged estate, all may be despoiled of their inheritance by a host of usurping parasites, such as, in palaces reared by hands, have often enacted a resembling part."

"The above description of a common oak-apple, its Gall-fly occupant, and Ichneumon intruder, may seem over-fanciful; but in writing of Galls, our pen may possibly be carried from the dry land of simple fact by some spirit of fiction in our ink—an infusion, it is likely, of gall-nuts, the produce of the East, the very region of romance. With graver pens than ours fancies would seem, indeed, to have been the very growth of Galls; for, descending on their origin, an Italian entomologist, an observant naturalist—one who waged war, moreover, with popular fallacies—imagines that Oak-apples and Galls were animated, nay, brought into being, by a soul—not an animal, but a vegetative and sensitive soul—in the plant itself. To account for the mysterious entrance of life into the centre of an imperforate ball, he might just as well have adopted, and slightly modified to suit his purpose, the no less imaginative notion of some learned Jewish Rabbins, who believed, or not believing, taught that human souls transmigrate after death into leaves and buds. 'For certain crimes,' they would have it, 'a soul goes into the leaf of a tree; the wind then rises, and, shaking it about, causes great torment. This punishment ceases when the leaf falls to the ground: though sometimes, indeed, such a soul passes from leaf to leaf through several.'

"Before we throw these learned bubbles entirely away, suppose we, in sport, toss up the last of them, just to make with it another random hit at the origin of life in the oak-apple. Let us fancy, with the sagacious Rabbins, an erring soul incarcerated within a single leaf, or wandering from one green prison to another. A portion of its guilt thus expiated, we may imagine it in remittance of punishment, and, as a first step towards restoration, permitted to throw aside its mere vegetable skin, and to put on an animal form (albeit one of the very lowest), as the grub, or even egg of a gall-nut insect. Under a transition so important as the recovery of an animal shape, however insignificant, could a poor soul do otherwise than cause a most irregular disturbance amongst the contiguous vegetable juices—which, forthwith beginning to ferment, and rise, and consolidate around it, soon constitute again its vegetable prison—a prison of no larger dimensions than the narrow circle of an oak-apple, or a currant-leaf gall."

We will simply add, that the illustrations are as interesting as the letterpress; and we leave the *Episodes of Insect Life* to the popularity that is sure to attend them.

The *Strange Adventures of Kit Bam, Mariner*, by Mrs. Cowden Clarke, is a book of last year; but it is likely, we should think, to be a favourite as long as "Gulliver" or "Sinbad the Sailor." That is saying a great deal for its immortality. *Kit* is sure to recommend himself to the young.

"'Twere a pity
To stint the wonders to the known, and leave
Imagination not a world to conquer."

So say the notes to the volume. We entirely agree in its wisdom, and think the authoress deserves the gratitude of all boys and girls for her story; and of grown-up people too, if they would only be modest enough to avow that they delight in such pleasant and instructive mixtures of truth and fiction.

The *Lady's Album of Fancy Work* is not exactly a book for the reading public; but the working public, or that portion of it whose nimble fingers supply the lords of the creation with the nick-nacks that affection loves to give and receive, will no doubt find it valuable. The following extract from the preface is the only passage likely to interest those who read. The workers will find interest in every page.

"The exercise of the needle has been from time immemorial a favourite occupation with the females of every country; and the allusions to the subject from cotemporary historians and poets evince that this feminine pursuit was regarded with approval and respect. The invention of embroidery is ascribed to the Phrygians; and we also learn from ancient authors, that the Sidonians particularly excelled in this beautiful art of decorative needlework; it must have also made considerable progress in this country soon after the Norman Conquest, from the accounts that are recorded of the robes embroidered in gold and silver, generally worn by persons of rank at that period. The Bayeux Tapestry also remains to us as a lasting trophy of the skill and industry of Queen Matilda and the ladies of her court, and is not more interesting as a historical record than as a specimen of the needlework of the mediæval age. The introduction of knitting into this country is comparatively of modern date—so late as the middle of the sixteenth century. The invention of the art is usually ascribed to the Spaniards; though the Scotch, with some appearance of justice, assert their claims as its originators. Like all inventions, knitting has undergone wonderful improvement since it was first simply used for stocking-making; and the value attached to stockings so made may be judged from the fact, that a pair were deemed a fitting present from one Sovereign to another. A pair of knitted hose was amongst the gifts received by that lover of finery, Queen Elizabeth; but no record remains to show if these were preserved with the three thousand robes which were found after her death in the wardrobe of England's Maiden Queen."

"The love for domestic occupations, which is so admirable a trait in the character of our countrywomen, has often been a subject of gratulation; and that female ingenuity and skill may continue to be employed in embellishing the drawingroom, rather than in directing the political intrigues of the *salon*, must be desired by all interested in the preservation of those domestic attributes which give so pleasing a charm to home, and secure the comfort of all around."

"The taste which her Majesty Queen Victoria evinces for feminine pursuits and occupations has naturally exercised considerable influence in preserving habits of industry amongst her female subjects; and to her Majesty's example, and that of the amiable Queen Dowager, may be ascribed the labours of the English embroiderers are now justly appreciated, and her work esteemed as in no respects inferior to the produce of foreign ingenuity."

What have we we here? Verily, "Old Friends with New Faces"—one-and-twenty stories of our childhood—with more than one hundred illustrations by John Absolon and Harrison Weir, under the title of "A Treasury of Pleasure—Books for Young People," and seasonable as a Christmas addition to the nursery or play-room. Here are Little Bo-Peep, Simple Simon, Mother Goose, the House that Jack Built, Cock Robin, Mother Hubbard, the Three Bears, Fox and Geese, Tom the Piper's Son, Goody Two Shoes, and other little histories, too numerous for us to mention. Some bibliographical skill has been shown by including in the collection The Wonderful Story of Henny-Penny, and The Robin's Yule Song—which are told by nurses in Scotland; and Southey's version of the story of the Three Bears. The wood-cuts are not the grotesque and unlikelike designs formerly common in books of this class, but they are pretty and graceful realities. The men, women, and children, drawn by Mr. Absolon, wear the costume of the last century, but are pleasant people; and the quadrupeds and birds (always an excellent feature in children's books) are from the well-practised pencil of Mr. Weir. There is, by the way, in both classes of subjects a rural and picturesque character of simplicity—the fittest charm for childhood. The binding of the book is an elegant design, in blue and gold, by Mr. Owen Jones.



BLINDMAN'S-BUFF.—DRAWN BY KENNY MEADOWS.—(SEE PAGE 418.)



FORFEITS.—DRAWN BY KENNY MEADOWS.—(SEE PAGE 418.)

THE FEAR OF THE WORLD; OR, LIVING FOR APPEARANCES.

BY THE BROTHERS MAYHEW,

Authors of "The Greatest Plague of Life," &c.

CHAPTER I.

"TIEN! seulement une sole frite! C'est bienheureux, ma chère, que je n'ai pas demandé de mes amis à dîner. Tu auras du me le dire ce matin."

Mr. Wellesley Nicholls always made it a point of speaking to his wife in French upon such subjects as he did not wish to come to the servant's ears; and, upon this occasion, owing to the presence of the page-boy Parker, who, in his white cotton gloves, stood at the sideboard, waiting at their early three o'clock dinner, Mr. Wellesley Nicholls translated into that language the feelings he experienced on lifting up the cover before him, and finding only a fried sole, which he knew to be the usual family apology for cold meat.

Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls not being so expert a linguist as her husband, objected to argue the point in a foreign tongue; so answering simply "Oui," she told the page to pull down the blinds, and that he need not stop, as she would ring when he was wanted; and that, if any one called, they had gone for a drive in the Park.

The boy left, and she proceeded:—"As for telling you, my dear, that we should only have a make-up dinner to-day, why, of course, I thought you would recollect we were going to the Chief Baron's to-night, and I never dreamt that you would be so foolish as to bring anybody home with you. Besides, surely cold meat ought to be good enough for us when we are by ourselves."

"My dear Sara," answered Wellesley, "I'm not grumbling about the cold meat, only I can't be expected to carry all these arrangements in my head, and you should have told me, my love; for suppose I had brought any one home, now, how pretty it would have looked!"

"As for that," returned Sara, "we might have said it was lunch. But I should have had to take all my hair out, and a pretty figure I should have looked by the time we got to the Chief Baron's. I never knew any one so thoughtless as you, Wellesley dear."

Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls had the misfortune to be what is called a showy woman—that is to say, she was tall and stoutish, of a dark complexion, and had a well-rounded shoulder, which her husband loved at evening parties to behold in contrast with a black velvet dress; and, moreover, she was unlucky enough to be blest with a remarkably fine head of black hair: so that, for the satisfaction of allowing her friends to see her ringlets twisting nearly down to her waist, she passed the better part of her existence in curl-papers; in which, indeed, she would have fainted to have been discovered.

This fine head of hair and that well-rounded shoulder—now nearly ten years ago—had won the heart of Mr. Wellesley Nicholls, a young barrister, with an allowance—till his profession enabled him to dispense with it—of £500 a year from his father, Sir Giles Nicholls, who held a lucrative Government situation at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and had been knighted, owing to the lucky accident of his having, as Mayor of that town, been called upon to present some "humble and loyal address" to the King at some particular period. As the only son and heir of the Knight, Mr. Wellesley Nicholls thought it his duty to uphold the dignity of the family in as noble and fashionable a manner as he could; and, though his friendly briefs and motions-of-course only enabled him to defray his clerk's wages and rent of chambers, yet the showy charms of his wife, and the paternal title, had induced him to keep up an establishment, and launch out into parties, in a style that had long ago made his friends set him down as a man of at least treble as much as his income really was.

Indeed, the main object of Mr. Wellesley Nicholls's life was to be considered by what he called "the world" as a much richer, nobler, and worthier man than he had any pretensions to be. His whole life was one round of schemes and tricks to gain the applause of "the world." He furnished his house, not for himself, but for "the world;" he kept servants for "the world;" he clothed himself, his wife and children, for "the world." He gave champagne parties for the praise of "the world," and stinted himself, when at home, in fear of it. He had married his showy wife to gain the admiration of "the world," and had cut her humble relations through the dread of its sneers. He was publicly generous and charitable, while, secretly, he was mean, false, and unjust. He was ever trying to plate truth with appearances. In a word, he lived and lied for "the world," and "the world" returned it by laughing at him for his pains. And to-day Mr. Wellesley Nicholls has drawn down the blinds for fear that "the world" might come and look in at the windows, to enquire what he was eating for dinner.

While they were still busy with their solitary fried sole, they were alarmed by a double knock at the door.

"There, now! Who can that be?" exclaimed Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls. "But it is always the case: if you happen to have a dinner you're at all ashamed of, half a dozen people are sure to call. Try if you can see who it is, Wellesley."

Mr. Nicholls accordingly advanced to the window, and, pulling the blind cautiously aside, endeavoured to command a complete view of the door-step, but in vain; while Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, when she heard the page coming up, opened the parlour door a little way, as gently as she could, and said in a whisper, "Hush—sh—sh! Mind, Parker, we're gone out for a drive in the Park;" and then, closing it, she stood listening at it, begging her husband, for goodness' sake, not to make any noise.

All that Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls was able to catch, however, was the sound of the door closing and of footsteps ascending the stairs, until, at length, she plainly heard them treading overhead.

"Why, I declare if he hasn't shown them up into the drawing-room!" then cried the horror-stricken Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls. "That boy must be half foolish! I thought we should never be able to keep him long. You must go up, my dear. I wouldn't be seen in these papers for I don't know what," she added, with a sly glance at the looking-glass.

"It's impossible, Sara; I really can't go up, smelling of fish and porter as I must. It's impossible; I really can't."

At this juncture the page Parker entered.

"I thought your mistress told you we had gone out for a drive in the Park?" began Mr. Wellesley Nicholls.

"I told the gentleman so, sir," answered the boy; "but he said he would step in, and wait till you came back, sir."

"Did he give you any card?" asked Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls.

"No, ma'am. He said the name wasn't of any consequence," returned the boy.

"What kind of a looking gentleman is he?" inquired Mr. Wellesley Nicholls.

"He a'n't exactly a gentleman, sir," replied the page; "he's a country-farmer-looking person, in top-boots, if you please, sir. He asked to see missus, sir."

"Est-ce que vous connaissez quelqu'un comme celui-là?" asked Mr. Wellesley Nicholls of Mrs. W. N.

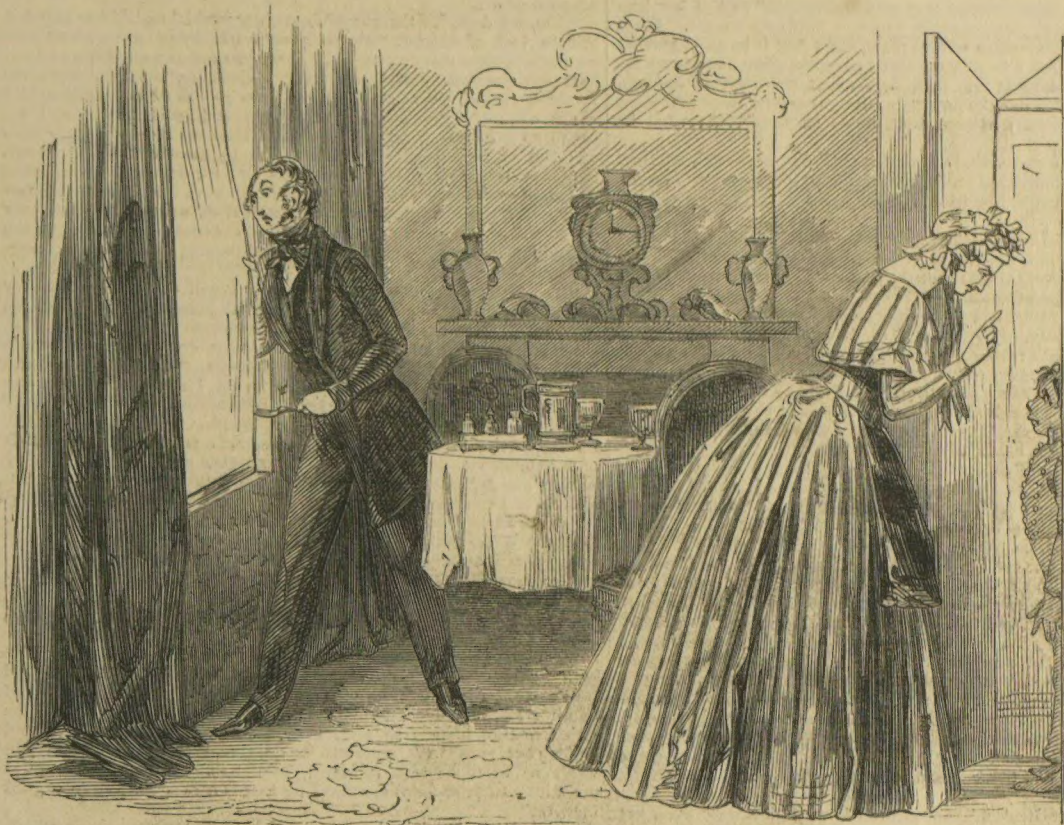
"That will do, Parker; you can go," said Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, avoiding a reply in French. And when Parker had gone, she added in a low voice, "The only person I can imagine it to be is the butcher, my dear."

"The butcher!" echoed Mr. Wellesley Nicholls. "Impossible, my dear! He could never have the impudence to come with a double knock to my door." And, remembering that his father was a Knight, he jerked his head back with becoming dignity.

"There's no answering for the airs that tradesmen give themselves now-a-days," returned Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls. "He's been after his money two or three times before, and behaved very insolently; only I didn't like to annoy you, my dear, by telling you of it at the time."

"Ah! but you should, my love!" peevishly replied Mr. Wellesley Nicholls, "you should. You forget I've my pecuniary arrangements to make, and you see the difficulties you get me into now, by keeping the applications of these people from me. For I don't like, my dear, to overdraw my account at the banker's, and I'm sure my balance there at present is not large enough to pay him. You must go up yourself, Sara, and get him to wait until the next quarter comes round. For I know, if I go, I shall get knocking the fellow down, and it's better to avoid such scenes before the servants."

Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls prepared to comply with her husband's request, by arranging her cap in the glass, and then went up-stairs, planning to herself what excuse she could make.



"Hush—sh—sh! Mind, Parker, we're gone for a drive in the Park."

When she entered the room her annoyance was in no way relieved on finding that the supposed butcher was none other than her only brother, Farmer Reuben Marsh, of Farnham, Surrey. Not that she had any dislike to her brother: indeed, it would have been strange if she had; for it was he who had supported her after her father's death, and who had cheerfully shared with her the few comforts of his home at a time when, owing to the embarrassed state of the family affairs, Reuben had found it difficult to keep the farm in his hands. But his manners and habits were so much at variance with those of the circle in which his sister now moved, that she and her husband were in constant dread lest it should be known that the fashionable Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls were in any way akin to the unpolished Reuben Marsh.

"What, Reuben! is it you, dear? Oh, I am so glad to see you!" she cried, running up to him. "Well, this is an unexpected pleasure, to be sure," and she kissed him in a manner that showed that she no longer relished the rustic perfume of the farm-yard that hung about his clothes.

"Ah! I knew my plump sister Sally would be glad to see a body again—I knew thee thee would, girl," answered Reuben, returning his sister's embrace with such hearty warmth that the little lace cap she had pinned on to the back of her head fell on the carpet. "Why, thee beest twice as buxom, Sally, as when I see'd thee afore, at the time I was up in London for the cattle show—now five year ago, that it be. Well, I thought I'd take thee by surprise, gal. But that boy of yours all over buttons, as if thee'd fastened his jacket on with brass-headed nails like, said thee'd gone for a drive in the Park, and thee wast at home after all. Why, what a lying young rogue he be, to be sure!"

"He didn't know you, Reuben, and we are out to all visitors to-day," answered Mrs. Nicholls.

"What! out when thee beest at home, Sally?" exclaimed her brother.

"No, but you don't understand these things, Reuben," she replied. "It's the fashion, when you don't want to see any of your friends, to say that you are out. They know what one means."

"Then, if thy friends know thee beest lying, gal, what a fool thee must be not to tell the truth. And pretty friends they must be, too, that thee don't care to see! Ah, Sally, Sally, when thee wast at Farnham, thee'dst always a bite and a sup for thy friends, instead of an untruth to turn them from the door with."

"Yes, but, Reuben, suppose you're not dressed to receive company," she continued.

"Why, then, dang it!" answered Reuben, "can't thee ask the folk to sit down whilst thee goest and cleanest thyself, as thee hast done, gal, many a time and oft before now?"

"Yes, but in London, Reuben," she added, "we can't do as you can in the country. You see, one's friends judge so from appearances here."

"Appearances! Yes, I know, you mean the look of the thing like,"

returned Reuben. "Now, I'll tell thee what it be, Sally. To other day I went to Farmer Griffiths—him as bought our black cow the year afore you left us: well, I seed on the table in their best parlour, you know, a beautiful orange—quite a pictur' it was, with such a beautiful gold coat of his own, surely! The old gentleman seed me looking at it, and says he, 'Will you have an orange, Reuben?' 'Thank you,' says I, 'I don't know as I won't, if I been't a robbing on you.' So I takes it up, and when I comes to try it, dang'd if I didn't nearly break a tooth. You'll laugh, like the old gentleman did, when I tell you, for, bless you, it warn't nothing but stone! So, that's what comes, you see, of trusting to 'pearances. Now, listen to me, Sally, if thee goest choosing thy friends by the fine looks of the cloth of their coats, they'll serve thee as the orange did thy brother Reuben; for, when thee comest to try them, thee'll find them nothing but stone after all. So, look about thee, gal! look about thee!"

"Yes, yes, I understand," answered Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, growing fidgety at her brother's lengthened visit, and fearing every minute that he would be asking to see her husband. "Well, now, dear Reuben, that you are here, I hope you're come to stop. Wellesley would so like to see you when he comes home."

"Oh, then, he's out too, eh?" replied Reuben. "Ah, I know what you mean now. It's the fashion, as thee said, when thee doesn't want to see thy friends, to say thee're out. I am getting quite a London man, you see, Sally."

"Why, what a strange person you're grown, Reuben," remarked Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls. "You will take everything wrongly. Now, do let me order something for you, if it's only a glass of wine and a biscuit."

"No, thank thee, Sally, girl," returned Reuben. "You see, I passed my word to dine at the Black Ram with neighbour Williams, as stood godfather, you know, to my little Tommy. And, to tell thee the truth, I should not be much at my ease here, for I be quite afraid to move for the crockery and things."

"Oh, you needn't be frightened of that, Reuben," answered Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, "for we don't take our meals in this room."

"Ah, then, thee beest frightened to use it thyself, eh?" returned Reuben. "Well, Sally, it be plaguey fine, gal, sartintly. They say a body had better not spile the ship for a hap'orth of tar; but I be afraid, lass, thee beest a-spiling her here with too much on't. And look thee, Sally," he continued, lifting up the brown holland covering to the ottoman on which he was seated, "where be the use of these grand satin covers, if thee beest obliged to hide them under these here pin-afores, eh?"

"You see they are too good for every-day use, Reuben," answered Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, "and so we keep them covered up; that is what is called a housewife's prudence."

"Well, but it seems a queer kind of prudence," he returned, "to have two covers to do the work of one. I always thought that was what folks meant by extravagance."

"Yes, but don't you see, Reuben," she continued, "the one is for every-



"She looked much younger than when he had married her."

day use, as I said before, and the other for grand occasions—when our friends come.”

“Then London folks must be very generous people,” replied her brother, “to put themselves to so much expense for their friends. Why, they told me London were a wicked place, but I find it be quite another sort of a thing. Yes, I be sure on it now; because afore thee came up, Sally, I were a-looking at this book here about the Orphans’ Asylum, and I see thee hast given the poor babes five guineas for these four years past; but thee spells thy name without ere an ‘h’ now Sally; what be that for?”

“Oh, that’s only one of Wellesley’s fancies,” she answered, smiling, whilst inwardly she writhed under her brother’s rude sarcasms. But you surely can’t be going to find fault with my subscribing to the Orphans’ Asylum?”

“No, Sally, gal, I be main glad to see thee do it, and find that after thee has done so much here for thy friends, thee hast got summat left for the poor fatherless things; though it strikes me I should have loved thee better, gal, if, among all thy charity, thee hadst offered to help a body with even a pound or two towards poor father’s debts. I’ve had a hard time on it, Sally, to pay them all; but, though I would not have taken your husband’s money, yet I should have blest both of ye for doing all ye could for the honour of the poor old man when he were dead and gone. It were a deuce of a struggle, Sally, but I ha’ got through it all now, thank goodness, and paid the last three and twenty pounds two years come Michaelmas; so that thee needn’t be ashamed of thy relations now, Sally, thee needn’t.”

“Well, but Reuben,” she said, kissing him, “I am sure I was never ashamed of my relations. But calm yourself, and don’t talk so loud, there’s a good brother, for I know you wouldn’t like the servants to hear all about dear father’s difficulties.”

“No, sister Sally, not for the poor old man’s sake, I wouldn’t. Now, listen to me, dear,” he continued, taking her hand; “maybe, I’ve been rough and hard with thee, but I was angered, gal. When thee lived with I and Molly, at Farnham, thee wast a different lass. Then thee spoke as thee thought, and thee loved thy brother as much as he loved thee, and thee were proud on him for all he had battled through, and used to tell my Molly there weren’t a squire round to be put beside him. And when counsellor Nicholls asked me to gie thee to him, though I felt loth to part with thee, Sally, yet I thought ye loved one another; and as he had twice the means that I had to make thee happy, I gave thee away to him, and that’s now near upon ten years ago. And since then I’ve seed thee three times, and each of them were of my own seeking; and thy husband but once, and thy little ones ne’er a once at all.”

“Yes, but, dear Reuben,” she answered, with downcast eyes, not liking to look him in the face, “you know when you called you would never say till they could be brought down to you.”

“No, Sally, girl, I never were at my ease in thy house yet,” he added, “for thee always put thy brother in a grand gilt, cold room, by himself, and thee wast a quarter of an hour before thee came to him, and then thee seemed so stuck up like, that I were almost freeze’d when I kissed thee; and though my Molly always sent thee the fattest of the turkeys and good things at Christmas-tide, yet thy letters were only full of thanks, and never said a word about coming to see a body.”

“Yes; but you forget, Reuben,” she interrupted, whilst a tear trickled down her cheeks, “my husband’s business always keeps him in London.”

“Well, Sally, girl,” he continued, kissing her, “I’m glad to hear it; I feared it were otherwise. But even now, when I come to see thee, thee meet me with a lie on thy door-step, and set me in a room with ruin written in gilt letters all about it, and covered over with a fine carpet that I be a-gift to put my hobnails upon; so that a body can’t help thinking how long it will be before I see it with an auction bill on it, hanging out of the window. There! thee needn’t start, girl: they be hard words to fling at thee, but they be the truest and the kindest meant, thee’st heard these ten years; for I know what £500 a year can do better than thee canst. Tell me, Sally, and I’m as certain sure as if I seed the bills, that more than half these gewgaws be not paid for; and that thee beest like the play-actors, dressed in a lot of finery that don’t belong to thee.”

“Mr. Nicholls, Reuben, will attend to his own affairs,” she answered, rising; “and perhaps it would be better if other people followed his example.”

“Ah! I know what thee meanst,” he continued; “but I’ve reproached myself for not warning thee many a year before; for, depend on it, no good will come on it, gal. Ah! poor Sally, Sally, thee’st got a bitter winter to go through, and maybe that thee’lt be glad to come down then to see thy brother. There! there! come, give us thy hand, gal, for Reuben, though he do say it, be the best friend thee’st got in the world; so don’t let us part otherwise.”

Kissing her even more fondly and rudely than when he entered, he left the room; whilst Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls haughtily rang the bell for the page to usher her brother out; and then, sinking on a sofa, the storm that she had kept suppressed within her burst out, and she sobbed as though she still had a heart to break.

CHAPTER II.

MR. WELLESLEY NICHOLLS—who, during the preceding scene in the drawingroom, had been vainly endeavouring, in the parlour, to interest himself with “the morning paper,” while his whole attention was fixed upon the angry tone of the visitor’s voice overhead—felt considerably relieved when he heard the bell ring to announce the intruder’s departure, and the street-door slam to, in confirmation of it. And then Mr. Nicholls became excessively impatient to learn what arrangement his wife had come to with the supposed butcher; but, finding she did not come down, and not hearing her move about, he grew alarmed, and ran upstairs to inquire into the matter.

He was surprised to find his wife in tears; and, taking her hand, said, in a tender voice, “Why, Sara, my love, what is the meaning of all this? Has that scoundrel been insulting you? Why not have called me, eh?”

“It was not the butcher,” answered Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, from beneath her handkerchief; “it was my brother Reuben; and he’s been going on in such a dreadful way at everything in the house. He said we were going to rack and ruin.”

“Your brother Reuben, was it? And he said we were going to rack and ruin, did he?” returned Mr. Wellesley Nicholls, between his teeth. “Very like a brother, indeed. And, even if we were, I should like to know what the deuce Mr. Reuben Marsh has got to do with it?”

“And so I said to him; and he went away in a passion,” replied Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls.

“Perhaps it would be better if he stopped in the country, along with his pigs. What does he want prying here?” inquired Mr. Wellesley Nicholls, indignantly. “If he knew anything of society, he might have seen, from our never returning his visits, that we didn’t wish to have anything to do with him.”

“He said you had always avoided him,” continued the sobbing Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls. “He seems to be dreadfully altered of late. I declare he did nothing but find fault from the very moment he came in.”

“Of course, the boor did,” continued Mr. Nicholls. “He’d have been smooth-faced enough to me, though, I’ll be bound. I suppose you objected to let him spit in the bright stove, or he wanted to smoke his clay pipe up here—eh? A low, beer-drinking, chaw-bacon farmer! It’s no reason, because I made you my wife, that I should be obliged to marry the whole family. And he shall see that I won’t, either; for I’ll take good care that he never sets foot in my house again.”

“You are forgetting yourself, Wellesley,” exclaimed Mrs. Nicholls, angrily, at the same time rising and shutting the door which her husband had left ajar. “My brother Reuben may be plain-spoken; but he is not low, nor is he a chaw-bacon. And, even supposing he were, I do not think that it exactly becomes his sister’s husband to publish it to all the servants. Besides, his greatest enemy could not say that he doesn’t mean well.”

“Means well?” exclaimed Mr. Wellesley Nicholls: “certainly, and so does your wild Indian savage when he a—when he a—but no matter; we had better change the subject, my dear. Of course, your brother Reuben, having been bred in the country, can know nothing of London life; and when he comes up here from his humble fireside, and sees a house elegantly furnished, I dare say it does strike him as extravagance. But you know as well as I do, my dear, that, from the position we hold in society, there is not a single article here that we could dispense with; and that these looking-glasses, and ottomans, and tables, and china ornaments, and what not, are as necessary to us, in our station, as his ploughs, and carts, and horses are to him.”

“Of course they are, Wellesley dear,” answered Mrs. Nicholls. “And, besides, I should like to know how Reuben can tell whether we can afford it or not.”

“Yes, my dear, it’s the way of the vulgar world,” replied her husband, with a look of disgust. “People always will know more about your own affairs than you do yourself. Now, you are as well aware as I am, that our greatest, indeed our only serious, expense has been our furnishing; and, thank goodness, we have got as elegant a house over our heads as any of our acquaintances; and, what is more, I am proud to say it is nearly all paid for. How we have done it, I can’t imagine. It seems almost like a dream to me. But this I will say, Sara, my love, that, if it had not been for your excellent management and rigid economy, I don’t suppose I should have been here at this moment. But the struggle is over, thank Heaven, and we have now only got to retrench, and cut down every little expense at home that we can possibly do without, to clear off the few remaining debts that are hanging over our heads.”

“Yes, Wellesley, my dear, I am sure I will do everything in my power,” answered Mrs. W. N.; “though at present I certainly do not see how the housekeeping expenses can be reduced.”

“Nor I, my sweetest. Understand me, Sara, my love, I am not finding fault,” continued Mr. Wellesley Nicholls. “You are a wonderful woman, and deserve the highest credit; for I am sure the table you have managed to keep upon the small allowance you have had is perfectly extraordinary. Indeed, people, my dear, imagine, from the style we live in, that I am a man of more than a thousand a year. But when I speak of retrenchment, my love, I only mean that we must not give so many parties, and not invite a set of people whose houses we never set foot into. For I can assure you, Sara, no one can imagine my state of mind when I thought I heard the butcher abusing you for his money; and, to tell you the truth, I made a vow that I never would expose myself to the same indignity again; and never incur a debt, however small it might be, without having the money to discharge it—or first seeing my way clear, which is the same thing, you know.”

“It’s the best plan, you may depend upon it, Wellesley,” returned Mrs. W. N.

“You’re quite right, my poppit,” continued Mr. Nicholls; “for I’ve been casting up everything in my mind, and I find that it will take exactly three quarters of my father Sir Giles’s allowance to put us all straight and comfortable again. So dry up your tears,” he added, seating himself by her side on the sofa, and kissing her, “and bathe your eyes with some eau de Cologne, there’s an angel, or you won’t be fit to be seen to-night, I declare. Come, now, I have got a little surprise for you, something that is sure to put you in a good humour.”

“Now, Wellesley, love,” expostulated Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, with a smile, “after all you have been saying, I hope you have not been running into any fresh expense by buying me a new dress. It would be so foolish of you, for I’m sure I don’t want it.”

“No, my dear,” answered the husband; “your black velvet is quite good enough. You know you’ve only worn it three times, or four at the most; and that would be extravagance, if you like. But you see, Sara, I’ve long wanted to get into the Chief Baron’s set—it’s such a passport to one; and you know, my darling, my chief pride has always been to hear you acknowledged to be, wherever you went, the best-dressed person in the room—and diamonds do give such style to a woman; and, with your black velvet dress, they would look positively superb. So I’ve ordered the jeweller to come here about six, and show you some.”

“Really, Wellesley dear, you should think of what you are doing,” Mrs. Nicholls returned, kissing him. “It seems unkind to refuse you, but you know we cannot afford it; and I am sure my aquamarines would do very well. It is so imprudent of you, darling. You let your affection lead you astray.”

“You see, my poppit, you don’t understand these things,” replied Mr. Wellesley Nicholls. “Diamonds, although they are the dearest articles you can buy, are really the least expensive in the end. It is merely an investment of capital; for they are things that never wear out, and are always worth their money. And aquamarines, to say the truth, don’t become you. A fine woman like you, Sara, requires something more rich and distinguished.”

“Lor, Wellesley, how can you go on so? And perhaps the jeweller would make some allowance for the aquamarines,” suggested Mrs. W. N.

“Why, I think you had better keep them, my dear; they will always come in handy, you know, for minor occasions. At first, I thought of hiring you a suite for the night, Sara; but, on second thoughts, I couldn’t bear the idea of your going about in borrowed plumes; and I knew the jeweller wouldn’t bother me for the money—indeed, my father has dealt with him for years; so that you see, my love, there’s no occasion for you to alarm yourself about the expense.”

“Go along with you, Wellesley. You’re a foolish, good-natured, extravagant rogue of a husband, that you are,” said Mrs. W. N. “I declare there’s no use talking to you. You were made for a barrister; you can persuade any one to do anything.”

“Oh, by the bye,” suddenly exclaimed Mr. Wellesley Nicholls, “I forgot to tell you Lively Harry’s coming here to-night.”

“What, Mr. Harry Chandos?” inquired Mrs. Nicholls.

“Yes, my love,” answered her husband; “I met him to-day in the Temple, and he told me he was going to the Baron’s to-night, but that he had to be at a dinner-party first in Sussex-terrace. So I asked him, as he would be in the neighbourhood, if he would take a seat in our brougham, and he said he would be with us about eleven o’clock.”

“I declare that man goes everywhere,” exclaimed Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls; “I don’t think I ever went to a party without meeting him. He certainly is a very agreeable man; he knows everybody and everything, and always has such a deal to say for himself. I suppose that’s why you call him Lively, Wellesley?”

“It’s a nickname his friends have given him, my dear,” answered Mr. Nicholls; “he certainly has got into very good society, and how the deuce he has managed it I can’t tell; I fancy it’s the nice pleasant way the fellow has got of his own.”

“Do you know what he is, Wellesley dear?” enquired Mrs. Nicholls.

“Why, a gentleman, I suppose,” answered her husband.

“Yes, but how does he live, that is, what property has he got?” continued the lady.

“Really, I don’t know, my dear,” replied Mr. Wellesley Nicholls; “that’s his affair, not mine.”

“But, I mean, what was his father?” asked the lady.

“Why, I never heard him speak of him,” returned Mr. W. N. “But Harry will be here to-night, my love, and then you can ask him all about it.”

“My dear Wellesley,” exclaimed the lady, indignantly, “how can you think I could do such a thing? Only it is so strange, isn’t it; he’s everywhere, yet nobody knows anything about him. I never even heard where he lives yet.”

“No, nor any one else, Sara,” answered Mr. N. “He has all his letters addressed to his club; and he’s a very agreeable, honourable, and good-natured fellow, and people don’t trouble their heads any further about him.”

And so it was; Mr. Henry Chandos—or Lively Harry, as he was called—was one of the many human mysteries so frequently met with in London: in fact, he was one of the fashionable peripatetics known as men about town. He was neither good nor ill looking, nor dashing, nor witty; but he had a good set of teeth, and consequently was always smiling, which made people think him more good-natured than he really was. He played billiards well, and was a good hand at cards—though, to do him justice, he did not make a practice of either. He was what the ladies called a “quizz,” and possessed a large fund of “small talk,” which he told in so rattling and pleasant a manner, that many of his young companions considered him a wit; for, though no diamonds fell from his mouth when he spoke, still he sent forth a good imitation “paste,” which sparkled nearly as well. Moreover, he was just the fellow to keep a dinner-party in good humour; and he had a good figure for a ball-room, waltzed well, sung prettily, and was a universal favourite with children. He had been engaged as second in two or three “affairs of honour,” and knew a number of men in the army; had few enemies, and always some money in his purse. In a word, he was a good companion and a great riddle.

Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls had scarcely finished their conversation about the above gentleman, when the page Parker informed them that a person from the jeweller’s was waiting below; and going down, they found that the jeweller had sent the two diamond bracelets as ordered, for Mrs. Nicholls to tell which she preferred, and another, which

was such “a bargain,” that the man had brought it “just for them to look at.”

Mrs. Nicholls thought the first very beautiful—it was only fifty guineas. The second was very splendid, and the stones were larger; but she thought it was not so well worth eighty guineas as the first one was fifty. Besides, the setting was not so tasty.

All this the jeweller’s young man admitted, adding that it was merely the difference in the size of the stones, and that the fifty guinea one certainly did look quite as good as the other; and any one unacquainted with the value of brilliants would not be able to tell the difference. This decided Mrs. Nicholls, and she was resolved to fix upon the fifty guinea article, until the jeweller’s young man opened the red morocco case containing the “bargain,” which threw both Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls into raptures of admiration.

It was a bracelet, and brooch to match, which the jeweller assured the lady and gentleman he could afford to let them have “at the exceedingly low price of one hundred and twenty guineas;” adding that, if the articles were broken up, the stones alone would be worth the money, only it was an old pattern, for which there was no demand at present.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, although not deeply skilled in the market value of brilliants, were perfectly astonished at the lowliness of the price, and agreed with the tradesman that they never could have been made for less than double the money. Mr. Nicholls declared that they were much cheaper than the fifty guinea bracelet, and thought he must be tempted to take them; although he told the young man, in a jocular way, that his master must not blame him (Mr. Wellesley Nicholls) if he never got the money; at the idea of which the young man laughed, and said that Mr. Nicholls’s father, Sir Giles, had dealt with them so long, that they would not have the least fear about their money if it were ten times the amount.

Mrs. Nicholls, seeing that her husband had set his mind upon the bracelet and brooch, touched his foot under the table, as if to say that they could not afford them; on which Mr. Nicholls again said that they were so wonderfully cheap and superb, and things that you only wanted to buy once in a lifetime; whilst the young man, seeing that Mrs. Nicholls’s love of economy still made her cling to the fifty guinea ornament, requested permission to be allowed to try the effect of the articles on the lady. And when he had put them on, Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls went and looked at herself in the long glass between the parlour windows, while she twisted her arm and body about so as to make the jewels sparkle, and smilingly confessed that they certainly did look very handsome. Her husband said he never, in all his life, saw diamonds become a woman so well; and then he recollected that she had no brooch fit to match the brilliants, and that it would be impossible for her to go out without any; and, besides, on her black velvet body the diamond one certainly would look magnificent. When the jeweller’s young man expressed a similar opinion, Mr. Nicholls, despite the black looks of his dear Sara, decided upon having the “bargain,” and the young man packed up the two which had been selected in the morning, and took his departure.

By eleven o’clock Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls was dressed, and looking as handsome as her long ringlets, and black velvet dress, and the diamonds could make her; and her husband passed the time while they were awaiting the arrival of “Lively Harry” in making her walk up and down the parlour, while he observed the effect, and declared that he felt quite proud of her appearance, and that she looked much younger than when he had married her.

Presently the brougham which they had hired for the night came to the door, and Mr. Nicholls told the boy Parker to see that the lamps were alight, and Mrs. Nicholls hoped that the coachman looked respectable, for that last time she went in the Park anybody might have told, from the man’s appearance, that the conveyance was hired.

It was not long before Mr. “Lively Harry” made his appearance, and having stated that it would never do to go to the Chief Baron’s for the next half-hour, commenced giving Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls a graphic description of his dinner party with a lot of Indian people who had lost their lives and their tempers; next he talked of all the people he had met in the Park that day, and told Mrs. Nicholls a little bit of scandal that was going the round of the clubs. Then he gave them a funny description of the last new sentimental novel, and amused Nicholls with the details of a splendid three hours’ run he had had with the Surrey hounds. He favoured them with a list of all the fashionable marriages that were on the tapis, and confided to Mr. Nicholls the name of the horse that he had heard was to win the next Derby; then he told them how extraordinary dull Brighton was, and informed them of the latest discoveries made by Lord Rosse’s telescope; and also of a large failure in the City, which he had heard of that day; and a well-authenticated anecdote of the Prince of Wales; and then one of a common railway navy in the north who had suddenly come into an immense fortune; and, moreover, he communicated to them a list of all the company that were to appear at the Opera next season. Whereupon he said, “By the bye, Nicholls, talking of the Opera, you know Lady Verulam, don’t you? Her daughter arried young Grigg, of the Guards, last season. Her town house is in May Fair. Well, I met her at Almack’s a few nights back, and an awfully dull evening we had, I can tell you: solemn as Exeter Hall—ha! ha! ha! I don’t know whether you have ever ventured an oratorio there, Mrs. Nicholls. It’s very scientific and very sleepy—ha! ha! ha! Well, to return to Lady Verulam. She’s not exactly a Croesus in petticoats, you see; and is, unfortunately for herself, afflicted with a strong penchant for the Opera, having got a brace of daughters to marry; and I’m afraid the girls, Mrs. Nicholls, love her so much that they’ll never leave her—ha! ha! Well, she’s taken a box there for next season—a snug one for her Ladyship to sleep in; and as she only wants it on the Saturday nights, she asked me if I knew anybody that would be likely to take it for the Tuesdays. It’s not dear: ninety pounds—a mere song for the Opera—ha! ha! ha!—so as I thought it would be just the thing for Mrs. Nicholls and yourself, I gave her your address and a card of mine as an introduction, and she’s going to call to-morrow or the next day.”

“It’s very good of you, Harry,” answered Nicholls, “and I’m sure my wife would be delighted; only, to tell you the truth, Mrs. Nicholls doesn’t like the Tuesday nights.”

“Oh, if that’s all, I’ll warrant the old dowager wouldn’t stand out about that; or, I dare say, she’d agree for you to have it one Saturday, and she the other. You leave me to settle the matter. I know her Ladyship’s weak side. If I was you, Mrs. Nicholls, I wouldn’t allow my husband to keep me locked up here all my life.”

“I’m sure we are very much obliged to you, Mr. Chandos, for thinking of us,” replied Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls, with a smile, while she inwardly shuddered at the idea of being forced by his officiousness into the extra expense of an opera-box.

“Not at all, not at all: I know it would just suit you—it gives one such a standing in society, you know, Nicholls. But hadn’t we better be en route, eh? It’s nearly twelve, by Jupiter. Allow me to help you on with your shawl, and cover up those charming brilliants of yours, for I declare they have quite made my eyes ache looking at them.”

“Ah, ah, ah!” affectedly laughed Mrs. W. N. “Do you like them, Mr. Chandos?”

“They are very chaste,” he replied; “chaste as an angel’s tears, or, what is the same thing, your own, Mrs. Nicholls. Do you hear what I’m saying to your wife, Nicholls, eh?”

“Yes, I hear you, Harry. Go on; don’t mind me,” answered Mr. W. N.

“The setting is not of the newest pattern, it is true,” continued Mrs. Wellesley, anxious to return to the subject of the diamonds.

“The fact is,” quickly added her husband, “they are some of her poor dear mother’s, and on that account we don’t like to have the setting altered. They have been in the family so long.”

“Certainly; very right—shows feeling, and that’s better than fashion any day,” answered Lively Harry.

While Nicholls was directing Parker to see if the brougham was at the door, the agreeable Mr. Chandos shewed Mrs. N. a new glove button, the last French invention, which a friend of his had just brought over from Paris; and then requesting her acceptance of the trifle, he took her arm and led her to the brougham.

When Parker asked “Where to?” Lively Harry shouted out loud enough for the neighbours to have heard him, “To the Lord Chief Baron’s.” And Mr. and Mrs. Wellesley Nicholls felt supremely happy; though all the way there Chandos had the talk entirely to himself, for they were each of them busy thinking what excuse they could make to Lady Verulam when she called on them about the opera-box. Of one thing, however, they felt convinced—that they must not dream of taking it.

(To be continued.)

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